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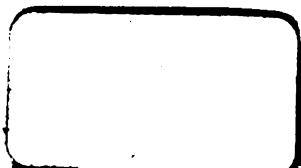
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# NETHERDYKE

*A TALE OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE'*



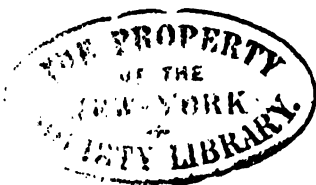
# NETHERDYKE

*A TALE OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE'*

BY

R. J. CHARLETON

AUTHOR OF 'THE PICTURE OF THE KING,' 'THE HONOURABLE JIM,' ETC.



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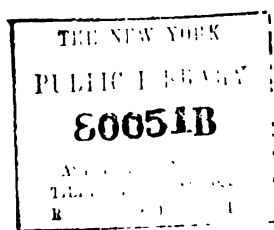
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# NETHERDYKE

*A TALE OF THE 'FORTY-FIVE'*

before him and we were fairly on our way, we were the best friends in the world, and so continued to be up to the day of his death. What manner of death his was, and how it came about, I shall tell later on.

When we arrived at Netherdyke it was dark. Even now, after the flight of so many years, my heart still holds in remembrance the glow of returning comfort and hope which thrilled it as I passed from the darkness outside into its homely light and warmth, and at the same time from the chill and desolate sense of loneliness and isolation which weighed upon my soul into the sweet consciousness of new-found love and protecting care. Still I can recall the scene—the wide-open door, the hall within, brightly lighted up, the curious faces of servants and others grouped inside, but, best of all, the two figures on the threshold—the one, a tall, stately-looking gentleman, of grave yet kindly aspect; the other, a no less stately lady, who greeted me with a sweet smile as Jock Corbitt lifted me down and set me before her. She stooped and caught me to her and kissed me warmly. Then the tall gentleman took me by the hand and led me within, she following.

The room we entered was one of moderate dimensions, its walls covered with panelled oak. How

well I came to know it afterwards, the oak parlour, as we called it! Two gentlemen and a little boy had entered before us, and stood watching us with some curiosity, I could see. The tall gentleman who had brought me in sat down and took me on his knee, while the lady gently undid my cloak and laid it on one side.

‘So, my little Gilbert Falconar,’ said the tall gentleman in a kind voice—‘so, my little man, you have arrived home at last. We’ve been expecting you, and are all glad to see you. Do you know who I am?’

I looked up into his face.

‘Yes, sir,’ I answered. ‘You are the Squire of Netherdyke—my cousin, John Belliston.’

‘And how do you know that?’

‘Jock Corbitt told me about you on the way,’ I answered, ‘so I knew it must be you.’

‘A sharp lad!’ I heard the elder of the other two gentlemen say.

The younger gave a laugh, and said something I did not hear; but I thought the elder did not seem pleased with it, whatever it was.

‘And did Jock tell you about anyone else?’ asked the Squire.

‘Oh yes. He told me I should see the kindest and the best lady in all the countryside, sir—your

sister, Miss Belliston—and Mr. Simon, your brother, and my cousin George, your little boy.'

Here the lady looked a little confused, but the Squire seemed pleased.

'I'm afraid Jock Corbitt is a gossiping rascal,' he said, with a smile. 'And yet he generally keeps his mouth pretty close. You must have bewitched him.'

'Oh no, sir,' I hastened to say; 'Jock's not a rascal. He's a good fellow, and I like him very much. And then, see how big he is, and how strong!'

'Yes, he's all that,' asserted the Squire. 'But did he mention no one else you were to see?'

'Yes. He mentioned a gentleman whose name I have forgotten. But he said he was a far-learned man, and that I should be sure to like him well.'

'There's for you, Thurston,' said the Squire, smiling again and turning to the elder of the two gentlemen. Then he called the little boy to him. 'Come here, George,' said he. 'Come and shake hands with your cousin.'

The boy came forward at once and took my hand. He was taller and stouter than I, though we were almost of an age, and I thought he looked very handsome, with his long flaxen hair, his fair complexion and great blue eyes; not at all girlish,

however, but bold and stout-looking, like a little man.

‘How do you do, Cousin Gilbert? I am glad to see you,’ said he, looking me frankly in the face. ‘We are all glad you have come to Netherdyke to stay with us and be at home here. We shall have some capital sport together, I promise you. I wish it was only to-morrow morning, and I would take you to——’

‘Hold hard, my man. Not so fast,’ interrupted the Squire. ‘Better get your suppers, both of you, and be off to bed. To-morrow morning will be here soon enough.’

Miss Belliston took us out—George and myself—gave us supper, and then took us upstairs and put us to bed, after hearing us say our prayers. Then, tucking us in, she left the room and my cousin began prattling of all he would show me on the morrow, but soon became drowsy and dropped over to sleep. As for me, I was really too tired to sleep. Every bone in my body seemed to ache, for it is no easy journey from Alnmouth to Netherdyke, some forty miles at least. At length, however, I was dozing over, when I heard someone enter the room, and saw the light of a candle.

It was Miss Belliston. She came to the bedside and looked at us. George had his arm round my



neck, and I lay with my eyes almost closed, as if I had been asleep. For some reason or other I thought it was best to do so. Perhaps I thought she would be better pleased if she thought me asleep. She stood for some time looking down on us.

‘My poor motherless lads!’ I heard her say softly. ‘You are both alike in that. But, with God’s help, I will be a mother to you both.’

And with God’s help, and the help of her own kind heart, so she was—God bless her for it!

Now, it is not my design to give any detailed account of these early days at Netherdyke, happy as they were, and sweet as is the memory of them to me. I wish to press forward to the more eventful and stirring period of our lives. Nevertheless, I must, for the better understanding of the story which has to come, give some brief account of the old house and the dwellers in it.

Netherdyke is a plain, commodious house of free-stone, and stands on the banks of the North Tyne. At the back of the house a wing extends at right angles to the main building, and abuts upon one side of a huge, ivy-grown old tower. This tower, the ancient home of the Bellistons in the old moss-trooping days, is built in the usual fashion of the peel-towers so common on the borders; that is,

the ground-floor is furnished with a vaulted roof of stone, and a staircase formed in the thickness of the wall leads to the upper floors. In my time the lower chamber was fitted with stalls, and on the upper floor was kept a store of hay and oats. Many a happy hour did George and I spend in this old place, often did we defend it against the attacks of imaginary foes, though sometimes we were the assailants ourselves, changing our character with the utmost of ease, as is the manner of boys. On one side the tower, and the wing connecting it with the house, looked down on the north garden and the north wood beyond ; on the other side of them were the stables and the stable-yard.

Of the inmates of Netherdyke something has already been said. John Belliston, the master of the house, would be, when I first went there to live under his guardianship, about forty-five, tall and stately of figure, as has been said, though rather spare ; fair and ruddy of complexion, wearing his own hair, which was of a yellow tawny colour. His brother Simon was ten years his junior, and as unlike him as could be in almost every respect. Thus, he was not tall, but of middle size ; he was not fair, but dark, his hair being quite black ; he was not open of countenance and frank, but of a sly, double-dealing nature, and furtive of expression ;

it was wonderful how two brothers could be so unlike, yet so it was. Their sister, Miss Belliston, who was in age midway between them, I have already spoken of. There was another sister, the youngest of the family; of her I shall have to speak later on. Then there was George, my half-cousin, his father and my mother being full cousins. Last of all, there was Mr. Thurston, who held rather a peculiar position in the house, not being in any way related to the family.

Andrew Thurston was some ten years the senior of the Squire, and they were very old friends, and had been comrades-in-arms during the rebellion of 1715. Both had been 'out' on that ill-fated enterprise with General Forster and Lord Derwentwater, but its results to them had been very different. The Squire's father was alive at the time, and the young man, after escaping abroad and serving in the French army for some years, had come home, a pardon having been procured for him, and, his father dying soon afterwards, had succeeded to the Netherdyke property. Mr. Thurston had not been so fortunate. He had, indeed, been pardoned, but not until his estate—a pretty considerable one it was—had been confiscated. Thus, when he returned to England, he was penniless and homeless, but his old friend and companion-

in-arms insisted on his taking up his abode permanently with him at Netherdyke; and so it was that he had settled down with the Bellistons to a quiet country life, employing his time chiefly in the collection of old North-Country ballads and songs, and the gathering together of old arms and armour, and other antiquities. Simon Belliston was not at all pleased with this arrangement, and inwardly chafed against the installation of the old gentleman in the house, calling him, in his own mind, an idle hanger-on and dependent of the Squire. He felt all the more sore because he knew he was in the very same position himself, doing nothing for his living, but idly lounging his time away and living at free quarters. Indeed, his case was even worse than that of Mr. Thurston. The latter was useful in many ways in the household. He acted as a sort of steward to the Squire, keeping all his books and accounts in order, and it was to him that George and I owed our earliest instruction, not only in letters but in horsemanship, fencing, and many other things. Of his secret dislike and jealousy of the old gentleman Simon took good care to let his brother see nothing, but there it was, all the same. In person Mr. Thurston was nearly as tall as the Squire. Like him, too, he was spare of figure, but, unlike him, he walked with

a slight stoop. His features were plain, even to ugliness, his face was like a fiddle, grave and solemn, too; yet still there was something in his eye, something mild and gentle, which looked out and made his homely face, if not a fine-looking one, yet one to be trusted and loved.

Of that space of time, some four years, during which my cousin George and I were absent from Netherdyke—the time we spent pleasantly and profitably enough at a school at Lowther, in Cumberland—I shall say nothing, for it does not concern my story. But of an event which took place shortly after our return, I must give some account.

## CHAPTER II.

### OF OUR LIFE AT NETHERDYKE.

ONE morning while we were at breakfast a messenger arrived with a letter addressed to Miss Belliston. She broke the seal, and as she commenced to read it we saw her face light up with pleasure.

‘John,’ said she, ‘it’s from Eleanor; and she says she’s coming to spend a few days with us, and will be here to-morrow. And she’s to bring little Kate with her.’

‘She’s welcome, I’m sure, and whoever she brings, provided she does not bring her husband,’ said the Squire.

He had a somewhat sullen look on his face as he spoke—something very rare with him. His words and manner will require some explanation, though we were all well acquainted with their meaning at the time.

Eleanor Belliston, the Squire’s younger sister, had, during a visit to Newcastle, become acquainted

with a gentleman named James Farnaby, a resident in the town. The acquaintanceship had ripened into love, and eventually the lady, much against her elder brother's wish, married Mr. Farnaby. Now, there was nothing against the husband's character as a citizen or a man—nothing in his position, financial or otherwise—to cause him to be considered by the world in general an unsuitable match for Miss Belliston. He was a gentleman by birth, though engaged in trade, being a merchant adventurer of considerable wealth. His appearance and manners were agreeable, his disposition kindly ; he was steady in his habits, diligent in his business, and likely to become one of the leading citizens of his native town. Why, then, it may be asked, did John Belliston object to his sister marrying such a man ? The answer is simple : James Farnaby was in politics a Whig—an upholder of the Hanoverian régime—and this was sufficient to render him odious in the eyes of the Squire of Netherdyke.

For John Belliston was—as may be inferred from an episode in his earlier career, which has been touched on—a Tory of the Tories, an unflinching believer in the right of the exiled James Stuart to the throne of Great Britain ; and he considered that all his family and all his friends should be of the same faith. Therefore it is not surprising that he

should have objected to a sister of his making a matrimonial alliance with one of the opposite faction. Still less surprising is it when we consider the bitterness which was imported into party politics at the time, and the virulence with which the dominant Hanoverians persecuted their opponents. To hold, or even to be suspected of holding, Jacobite opinions, was to render one's self liable to numerous pains and penalties imposed by the central Government, and rigorously enforced by its local representatives, sometimes even to the gratification of private spite.

For some time past things had been quiet, or comparatively so, and the persecuting enactments had not been so frequently carried into execution; but, about the time of our return from school, the fears of the Government had been again aroused by certain actions of the exiled Jacobites, and the local authorities were urged to greater activity. The penal statutes against Catholics were strictly enforced, and not only against Catholics, but also against non-jurors, and all known or suspected of Jacobite proclivities. Our Squire, being amongst the latter, was debarred from any participation in public affairs, for none but those known to be supporters of the Government were allowed the slightest direction. They could not act as magistrates; they could not set up for election to Parliament; nay, they were



not even allowed to vote in municipal or parliamentary elections. Many other disqualifications there were, and amongst them one which rankled more deeply in the minds of some of our friends than those seemingly of greater importance. This was the statute which debarred them from possessing a horse of greater value than five guineas. Little wonder is it, then, that our Squire cared not to see his brother-in-law, one of the stoutest adherents of the Hanoverian Government in Newcastle.

Next day George and I rode out on our ponies to meet our expected visitors. Mrs. Farnaby was a handsome matron, plump and rosy of complexion, unlike her elder sister, who was tall and spare of figure, like the Squire. As for the daughter, Kate Farnaby, how shall I describe her? None of us had seen her since she was a mere infant—she was two or three years younger than George and myself—and we were quite unprepared to see the vision which met our eyes just beyond Netherdyke Mill. Seated upon a pillion borne by a little white pony, which was led by a mounted serving-man, we saw the fairest little creature, so we thought, that ever was seen on earth. Both George and myself, now great lads of sixteen, were fairly taken aback, and sat bashful and almost awed before this apparition, so much more like what we had imagined a fairy

to be than any ordinary being of the common earth.

‘How now, young gentlemen!’ cried Mrs. Farnaby. ‘What ails you both that you sit there like two bumpkins, bereft of speech? Where are your manners, then?’

George was the first to recover himself. He reddened, took off his hat, bowed to his aunt, and then kissed her proffered hand, after which I followed his example.

Then George, now quite his old self again, his old gay, fearless, rather careless self, ranged up alongside his cousin’s pony, and saluted her. She would have given him her hand in imitation of her mother, but this did not suit Master George. Leaning over from his saddle, he threw his arm round her waist, and kissed her heartily square on the mouth. She reddened, and rather turned aside her face, so that it was half hidden by the flood of golden hair which fell in a great cascade until it rested upon her pony’s back, but I could see she was not displeased. Then I approached in my turn, and kissed her hand, after which we pushed on for home.

Now, when the little interlude I have described took place between George and Kate, I noticed that Mrs. Farnaby regarded the pair with a look which was certainly not one of displeasure, but rather one

of pride and admiration. As well it might be, for they were indeed a handsome pair. I have not attempted to describe Kate as she then appeared. She is better left to the reader's imagination. As for George, he was grown tall for his age, and promised to be in time taller than his father, and certainly much more robust in figure. His hair, though still light, had grown a little darker of late years; his eyes were of a deeper blue, his complexion more bronzed, and his features growing more firmly set, and of more manly cast with every day. He was fully a head taller than I, and—but I am forgetful—what does it matter about me? I must content myself with telling my story.

At the mill, old Nichol Wetherby, the miller, and his good-wife and son and daughter came out to see us go by, and pay their respects to Mrs. Farnaby and admire her daughter, and at length we all arrived at Netherdyke.

These few summer weeks which Kate Farnaby spent with us form a period in my life specially set apart by itself in my memory. During that period I, for one at least, was lifted out of the rut of common prosaic life, and lived in a dream of sweet poesy. A new light indeed seemed to come into our lives, emanating from that fairy form, that bright, vivacious spirit which for the time transfigured our

mean being. It was a glimpse into the Golden Age. I wish I had space to write the story of that time, of the glad hours—some of them bitter-sweet to me—we spent in the old woods of Netherdyke, and down by the riverside, the side of that river of all rivers to me, the North Tyne. But I have not space, and would only remark on two or three things.

To nobody could it be obscure that, during that time, my two cousins, thrown so closely together, seemed each day to be more and more drawn to one another. There was no mistaking that, and it was curious to notice the different effect it seemed to produce on those who witnessed it. Mrs. Farnaby seemed delighted, and her sister gravely pleased. The Squire was the only one who seemed blind in the matter; but as for Mr. Thurston, he looked contented enough about it. Simon was the only one who looked uneasy, and who strove by subtle and deep-laid, though all the time very transparent, schemes to keep the two young people apart, or at least to prevent them being left together without company.

The visit, like everything else, came to an end at last, and we were left alone to our humdrum life. It had never seemed humdrum before, but now it seemed as if the sun had dropped out of the sky or

some other great calamity of nature had occurred, so changed, so flat, so dull had life become.

And our lot was not improved, but the rather made much harder, by the state of affairs outside our circle, and in the country at large. Within the next few years many things occurred to flutter the Hanoverian dovescotes in London, and in consequence the Jacobites throughout the country suffered for the activity of their friends abroad.

Life in the country—at least, life amongst those of our side—became, under such circumstances, either too much worried by troublesome visitations, or too dull and monotonous, for there was now little going into the towns for distraction, as in former times. The county people of the opposite faction continued to resort to them in winter time, and had gay doings at Newcastle and elsewhere; but naturally the Jacobites held much aloof, and the race meetings held at Newcastle, Morpeth, Hexham, and other places, were about the only social gatherings they attended, if we except private meetings at one another's houses, and hunting parties.

Up to a certain period our inner life at Netherdyke had gone on much as usual, but about three years after our leaving school a great change came over the Squire's and also Mr. Thurston's behaviour with regard to George and myself. Up to that time

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politics had been freely discussed in our presence, and the hopes and aspirations of our party openly expressed. But now suddenly our two friends, and to some extent Simon also, became silent and reticent, and evaded any mention of politics before us. About the same time, too, I noticed that all three were frequently absent from home, sometimes for days together, and also that the visits of our Jacobite neighbours to Netherdyke became more numerous. There was evidently something in the wind, and I strongly fancied I had a clue to the truth.

However cautious they might be, however careful, even to the hiding away of the newspapers, they could not prevent public rumour making itself heard. In our visits to neighbouring farmers and others I could not but hear something of the news of the day. And when it became noised abroad that a great French force was gathering for a descent upon England, in the interest of King James, the rightful heir to the throne—a force which was to be accompanied by the King's son, Prince Charles, in person, then I knew my suspicions had been right. And when news came that a great storm had shattered the flotilla, and that the expedition was for the time being abandoned, the dejected visages of the Squire and his friends more than confirmed it.

But in the April of the following year was fought the famous battle of Fontenoy, wherein the Hanoverian and British armies with their allies, under the Duke of Cumberland, King George's son, were defeated, mainly by the bravery of the Irish Jacobite regiments in the French service. And with the news of that battle the old symptoms reappeared at Netherdyke—the same restlessness and evident expectation, a renewal of the secret expeditions, and of the visits of Jacobite neighbours for secret consultations.

And still George and I were kept in the dark, or supposed to be kept in the dark. I say nothing for George, but as far as I was concerned I saw through the millstone pretty clearly, though I said little or nothing to my cousin. His father evidently wished him kept in ignorance of what was going on; why, then, should I interfere between them with my suspicions?

So matters stood when an event occurred which was the beginning of our connection with one of the most romantic incidents in English history, and of our entering upon the extraordinary course of adventures the history of which I have to relate. What that event was I reserve for another chapter.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR COMES TO NETHERDYKE.

I CANNOT give the exact date, but it was one night late in the summer of 1745 that George Belliston and I retired to go to rest, leaving the Squire and his brother Simon sitting together in the oak parlour. Miss Belliston had retired some time before, and Mr. Thurston was absent on one of the mysterious visits I have before mentioned. The house was very still, so still and silent, indeed, that even when we had reached the head of the staircase we could hear the slow and steady beat of the clock in the hall below.

Having bidden George good-night at the door of his room, I entered my own, which adjoined, and the moon shining so brightly that no other light was needed, I extinguished my candle, and, opening the casement, sat down at the window to enjoy the balmy coolness of the air. Below me lay the scene I knew and loved so well—the gardens and the park,



the old woods sleeping in the moonlight, with the shadow of a cloud now and again sweeping darkly over all. From beyond the trees came the sound of the water of Tyne, borne on the wind, and rising and falling on the ear like sweetest music, so it always seemed to me.

Sitting thus, I fell into a kind of reverie or waking dream, in which all manner of thoughts passed through my brain. At first they were pleasant enough, but presently they took another form, and a strange, causeless presentiment of coming evil stole over me and oppressed my spirits. Doubtless my nerves were out of order, for as I sat pondering and dreaming, the vague sense of dread all the time increasing, a slight noise outside my chamber door caused a sudden thrill to run through my whole frame, and recalled me to the full use of my waking senses.

The noise I heard was the sound of soft footsteps stealthily stealing along the passage. A great fear came over me as I heard the footsteps reach my door, and then stop, and I felt that on the other side someone or *something* crouched and listened. I stood as one spellbound, gazing into the darkness of the room and expecting I knew not what dreadful form to pass through the solid wood and take shape before me. Then it was that

I first understood the full meaning of that passage in the Book of Job which says : ' Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof : an image was before mine eyes ; there was silence.'

If you are disposed to smile or sneer at my superstitious fears, place yourself, in imagination, in my position, but first take into account my early surroundings. The stories we heard on winter nights, told by the house servants at home or heard by the chimney corners of neighbouring farm-houses, were for the most part stories of ghosts and apparitions. Most of the people we had been brought in contact with from childhood firmly believed in supernatural visitations, and according to common report and belief the whole countryside was, after nightfall, alive with witches and warlocks, fairies, kelpies, bogles, and brownies. Even Mr. Thurston was, or professed to be, a believer in these beings, and nothing delighted him more than to listen to some tale of terror as related by some old man or woman ; indeed, he kept a note-book, in which he regularly set them down in writing. Little wonder, then, that I, alone in semi-darkness, in a remote part of an old rambling

house, late at night, and with nerves already a little unstrung, should be troubled with apprehensions of something unearthly on hearing these soft footsteps come stealing to my door. Still less wonder when I point out that the only room beyond mine was a great, bare, ghostly lumber-room, called the Long Room, built up against the wall of the old peel-tower, which everybody knew to be haunted.

Though it has taken me so long to describe my feelings, it was only for a few seconds that I stood spellbound and intently listening. Then I heard the footsteps move away as in the direction of the Long Room. Next came the sound of three slow, measured taps, exactly as if someone had struck them with his knuckles on the hollow panel of a door. By this time the sudden panic into which I had been flung began to leave me, and curiosity began to temper my fear. Unbuckling my shoes, I drew them off, and stole quietly across to the door, but it was some little time before I could summon up sufficient courage to open it. At length I did so, and peered cautiously out.

At the end of the passage, not far from where I stood, was the open doorway of the Long Room. Across the cavernous gloom within shot one long slanting moonbeam, and presently I heard a dull dragging sound, as if some heavy piece of furniture

was being cautiously dragged along. Then, at the further side of the room, I saw a little gleam of light, but it disappeared in a moment, leaving all, except for the moonbeam, dark as before. And now I could hear the sound of footsteps, very soft and slow, and two figures could be seen within the room, moving towards the door. When they entered the ray of moonlight, I saw the face of one of them lit up for a moment. It was a face quite strange to me, a pale face, black bearded, and heavy eye-browed—quite a strongly-marked face. The other one's face I could not make out, for he had his back turned towards me, and seemed to be leading his companion by the hand.

As I looked at the two stalking forward so stealthily and noiselessly, for neither wore shoes, a revulsion of feeling came over me, and my fear gave way to anger—anger that I should have been so afraid. It was all clear enough to me now. Here were no ghostly visitors, but beings of flesh and blood. Doubtless the stranger had lain concealed in the Long Room, waiting for night and the signal of his accomplice in the house, so that they might carry out their purpose, which, considering the secrecy of their movements, could scarcely be a good one. Softly drawing to my door, I stepped back into my room, and reached for a loaded pistol

which lay on the mantelshelf. Then, re-opening the door, I looked cautiously out again.

The two men had by this time got past my door, and were going along the passage in the direction of the main staircase. Some distance along, the passage turned off at a right angle towards the head of the stairs, and by the light of the moon I caught sight of them as they were turning the corner. Pistol in hand, I followed with all speed, but silently, for my design was to observe where they went, which I shrewdly suspected would be the plate closet, then to awake as many of the household as I could, and take the robbers in the act, for robbers I had come to the conclusion they were, but who the traitor in our camp might be who was betraying us I could not imagine. By the time I had reached the turn in the passage, they were on the staircase, so, creeping softly on, I reached the landing, and looked over the balusters. The staircase was quite dark, but I could hear them cautiously descending, so, slipping after them, as they reached the foot of the stairs, I gained the first landing, and there I paused.

The hall was dimly lit by the moonlight which filtered in, and from my position I could make out the two dark figures below me, as they stopped for a while to listen. Apparently satisfied that no one

was astir in the house, they began to move off again, but not in the direction I had expected them to take. Instead of making for the pantry, where stood the great plate-chest, they made for the door of the oak parlour.

And now a new fear seized me, as I saw by the light which streamed from beneath the door that the room was lit up, so that probably the Squire and his brother still sat there, all unarmed and unsuspecting of the evil which threatened them. Then it was, too, that I remembered the iron safe, built into the wall above the fireplace in the room—the safe in which a good many jewels and valuables were stowed away. Doubtless the accomplice from within the house knew of this, and doubtless both he and his companion were armed, where they stood ready to fall upon the two unsuspecting men. Swiftly I glided down the remainder of the stairs, and was about to give the alarm at all hazards, when the door of the parlour was opened, and I stood stock still with amazement at what I saw.

Within the doorway stood the Squire, facing the stranger and his accomplice, and, the light from within the room falling full upon the face of that accomplice, what was my surprise and consternation to recognise in it the face of Simon Belliston !

I was so taken aback that, for the moment, I

hesitated, not knowing what to think or do; then, to my further surprise, the Squire took the stranger's hand, and, grasping it warmly, drew him into the room. Simon followed, the door was shut, and I was left wondering what all this might mean.

## CHAPTER IV.

### SIMON'S ADVICE, AND HOW I DID NOT FOLLOW IT.

BEFORE next morning I was pretty well sure about the object of the stranger's secret visit. Seeing he had been so warmly received, I felt quite certain he had come on some business connected with politics, and that he must have been concealed in the Long Room, perhaps all the preceding day, until assured by Simon that the coast was clear.

Curiosity led me, immediately on rising, to visit his hiding-place, and I looked carefully round for any signs of his occupation. None, however, were to be seen. The dust lay thick and undisturbed on the various articles of broken-down furniture and other lumber which littered the place. There was only one door in the room besides that which gave entrance, and that was a cupboard-door. Remembering it was near this cupboard I had seen the light which heralded the appearance of the stranger, I



opened the door ; but the shelves inside were still as they had always been—piled up with dusty packets and rolls of paper, old accounts and receipts, and such-like. It was quite clear that no one could have been concealed here, and I was standing with the door still in my hand, and quite at a loss, when I heard a well-known, low chuckling laugh behind me, and, turning with a start, I saw Simon Belliston standing in the doorway.

I was naturally disconcerted to be thus discovered, and he perceived it, and enjoyed it ; for it was his way to come creeping unawares upon people, especially if they were engaged in something of which they had no cause to be proud, as was now my case. Even from the time that George and I were mere children, he had loved to do it to us, and it affected us in different ways. For my part, it generally made me angry, but George would only laugh and make sport of his uncle's mysterious creeping ways. On the present occasion I was too much put out at being caught in a sort of spying part to have anything to say for myself ; and he, seeing this, was mighty pleased with himself, and chuckled again.

‘Good-morning, Master Gilbert,’ he said mockingly. ‘Soon astir this morning, and keen on the scent—eh ?’

I flushed up in my confusion, and said nothing.

'Something interesting about the Long Room,' he went on, 'that we visit it so early—eh?'

I had by this time recovered myself.

'Yes,' I replied, 'there must be something, seeing, as you say, that *we* are here so early.'

He chuckled again, and then went on in his half-bantering, half-sneering way.

'We are very clever this morning; very sharp, indeed. Quite a credit to our friend Thurston's teaching. I scarce thought he had it in him to turn out such a wit.'

As usual, he did not let slip the opportunity for girding at the old gentleman. This rather roused my temper.

'Mr. Thurston,' said I warmly, 'has more sense and more wit than both of us put together.'

'Oh no, Master Gilbert. There you are wrong. There's one thing at least *we* know of which he knows nothing. But perhaps we had better say nothing of what we know, to the Squire at any rate. He might be vexed.'

'And what is it we had better not tell him?' I cried.

By this time I guessed pretty well what Master Simon was driving at. He evidently suspected I had seen something of last night's doings, but was not sure, and, in his accustomed way, was trying to

pump me. I should probably have told him all had he come to me and asked me point-blank, but this was not his way. He would be for ever working by tortuous methods, and cared nothing for what he could come by in a straightforward manner. So I, to serve him out in his own coin, set about to tantalize him somewhat, by affecting not to understand what he meant.

‘What is it we had better not tell him?’ I repeated.

‘What you have been telling George,’ he replied. ‘Of last night.’

‘But I have not yet told George,’ I said quickly, thrown off my guard.

He chuckled more gleefully than ever, at having caught me tripping.

‘Then do not tell the Squire,’ he said significantly.

I was beginning to tire of this tedious word-fencing, as people will do when they find themselves coming off second best.

‘Now, look you,’ I cried. ‘Let us have done with this, and come to plain dealing. By the merest accident, I saw a stranger here last night, and saw you lead him to your brother.’

‘I know you did,’ he said, always proud to show his omniscience.

Then he bit his lip and made a wry face, for he felt that he now had, in his turn, made a slip.

'Why, then, do you beat about the bush?' I inquired. 'And why do you wish me to hide my knowledge from the Squire?'

'Because he will be angry with you.'

'I shall tell him, nevertheless.'

'Take your own course, then, but remember I have warned you.'

'And as for George,' I had begun, when George entered the room.

'As for George,' said Simon, speaking loudly, and, as I thought, so that his nephew might be sure to hear—'as for George, you can do as you like. Tell him or not, as you think fit; but if you take my advice, you'll keep it to yourself.'

And, with another chuckle, he turned and left us.

'What's this mighty matter?' asked George, with a smile. 'Another of my worthy uncle's wonderful mysteries?'

I felt very uncomfortable. It was the first time I had had occasion to conceal anything from him—anything of importance, that is—and yet I thought it better to tell his father first, and ask if he had any objection to George's knowing. Besides, I felt certain that Simon's parting words were intended to whet his nephew's curiosity. For some reason of

his own he wished me to tell him, and I resolved to keep my own counsel for the present.

‘Yes,’ I answered, in an off-hand manner. ‘One of his mysteries. Let us go downstairs.’

‘But what was it?’ asked George.

‘Well, my dear George,’ said I, ‘it’s a secret I have surprised, which belongs to someone else, and I cannot well divulge it, even to you. You understand?’

‘Perfectly. And seeing it is as you say, why, we’ll say no more about it.’

This was like George. No beating about the bush with him. It did one good to talk with him and look into his honest eyes and frank, open face, especially after an interview with his uncle.

I did not see the Squire until after breakfast, when he sent for me to the oak parlour, where he was closeted with Simon.

‘Well, Gilbert,’ he cried, as I entered, ‘what is this I hear of last night? Is it your habit to go prowling about the house when you are supposed to be in bed and asleep?’

He spoke with some asperity, and I could not but conclude that his informant, by his way of telling the story, had somewhat prejudiced his mind against me.

‘Indeed, no, sir,’ I answered with a little warmth; ‘it is not my habit to do anything of the kind.’

'Only on occasions when it is likely to be inconvenient,' suggested Simon with a chuckle.

His brother gave him a glance which checked him, and motioned me to a chair.

'Sit down there, Gil,' said he kindly. 'Sit down and tell us all about it. Now it has happened, it cannot be helped. But tell everything you saw.'

I did as he asked me, told him all I had seen and heard, and concluded by saying it was my intention to have told him, even had he not asked.

Here Simon looked uncomfortable. I suppose he thought I was going to tell how he had advised me to hold my tongue. I said nothing about that, however.

'I suppose you have told no one of this except Simon and myself?' asked the Squire.

'No one,' I answered. 'Indeed, I should not have said a word about it before seeing you, even to your brother, only he knew last night, or at least had some suspicion.'

'How's this, Simon?' cried the Squire sharply. 'You said nothing last night, and mischief might have been done. What does it mean?'

Simon was confused. I had unwittingly let the cat out of the bag. But he soon had his excuse ready.

'I was not quite sure last night,' he said, 'though I fancied I saw someone on the stairs. You will

remember I opened the door and looked out shortly after we entered. There was certainly no one there then. So I thought it better not to disturb your mind, as, after all, it might have been only fancy on my part. Only I determined to make sure this morning.'

The explanation seemed reasonable enough, but I could not help wondering what had been Simon's motive for wishing me to conceal my knowledge of the stranger's visit from his brother. I felt sure he had only told of it himself, because I had declared my intention of doing so, and he wished to be beforehand in the matter. But what puzzled me most was, why he evidently wished George to know of the visit through me. Thinking of this, I asked the Squire if I had his leave to tell George.

'Certainly not!' he cried, with emphasis. 'Tell nobody—not a soul—least of all George. So far, you have behaved with commendable prudence. Continue to do so, and try and forget what you have seen. Only, remember this: that the person you saw last night came here, at the risk of his liberty and life, to render me a service, and that anything which may chance to leak out concerning his visit may have most serious consequences, and may endanger us all.'

## CHAPTER V.

CONTAINS MORE CONCERNING THE STRANGER.

GEORGE came rushing into the room just as I was about to leave. He was in a state of great excitement.

‘Hughie has come with the new horse,’ he cried. ‘He’s a beauty, and no mistake. Come and give him a look over.’

We all went out to the stable to see the new arrival, a horse the Squire had purchased a few days before from one of his tenants, who combined sheep-farming with horse-breeding, and whose son was the Hughie mentioned as having just brought the animal home. George was right. He was a beauty, and no mistake—a gallant gray of sixteen hands, and looking a fit mount for any king. So we all thought, as Hughie led him out into the yard and we saw his light and well-set head, his small ears, his large, beautiful and intelligent eye, his long and muscular neck, his sloping shoulders, deep girth, and firm and



powerful loins, his round and shapely feet. Then his flat legs, his lengthy quarters, strong fetlocks, and clean pasterns; in every limb and member he was a model of proportion, a picture of strength and speed combined. Poor old Cheviot, as I saw you that morning, with Hughie Dagg leading you and George standing by you, his hand upon your mane, little I dreamed of what the four of us were to see and go through together in the near future!

In the afternoon, George, at his earnest request, was allowed to ride him out, but only as far as the haugh by the river, where our horses were generally exercised. I went down to see, and found Hughie Dagg sitting perched upon the dry stone dyke, watching the animal's movements with great satisfaction.

A little active, wiry fellow, of five-and-twenty or thereabouts, was Hughie; his face tanned and his hair bleached by sun and weather. As I seated myself beside him, he slapped his thigh with his hand, and, with sparkling eyes, cried out:

'And is he no' a bonnie bit o' horseflesh, Mr. Falconar? Saw ye ever sic action and points! Ma sang, but he'll be a credit to Farneyleugh yet!'

Farneyleugh, you must know, was the place where Cheviot had been bred, a farm lying further up Tyne amongst the hills, and rented by Hughie's

father and uncle, in partnership. The Farneycleugh strain of horses was as well known all over the borderland as its breed of mountain sheep, and certainly more proudly thought of by the Daggs themselves.

'Eh, sir,' went on Hughie, 'it aye makes me feel a bit downhearted whenever we part wi' yen o' them. No' that I feel sae muckle about Cheviot there, seein' it's the Squire that's gettin' him. It's the ithers, that's been sold to black strangers. Man, when I've come across them I've seen me fair tempted to loup on, and awa' off wi' them back to Farneycleugh, spite of a'. Only last night, or I should say this mornin', I seed yen o' them, and it made me feel like that. Ye'll mind Blackcock, the black geldin' wi' the white star, him as we sold at Stainshawbank last year to Sam Fewster o' Newcastle? It was him, then, and it was down at the Skew Ford I saw him, of a' places i' the world; and I felt like gettin' haud o' him, only, ye see, Mr. Simon was there.'

'What!' I cried in amazement. 'Mr. Simon!'

'Yes, Mr. Simon Belliston, his ain sel', and a stranger wi' him, fra Netherdyke it's likely, seein' that Mr. Simon was convoying him. But is't possible ye didna ken he was there?'

'Oh, yes,' I replied, much confused. 'I know all about it. But I did not know he was riding.'

‘Neither he was. But I’ll just tell ye what I saw. Like as not, as I jaloused at the time, the Squire had his reasons for keepin’ his friend i’ the dark, and didna care to have a horse as weel as a man to hide awa’.’

Here Hughie gave a knowing wink. As for me, I was perfectly astounded and somewhat alarmed. Here was our secret known outside, and perhaps to more than Hughie. I pressed him to tell me all that had passed.

‘Weel, then,’ he began, ‘ye see I was doon at the mill last night seein’ auld Nichol and Dick.’

I did not interrupt, though I knew very well it was neither to see old Wetherby nor his son he went so frequently to the mill. Dick’s sister, Mabel, was the more likely attraction, so I thought.

‘Weel, then,’ he continued, ‘Dick and me took it into our heads that we wad have a try at the fish. I was the mair ready because I was to start at daylight this mornin’ to gan to Farneycleugh to fetch Chev’ot there away, and the best way to be sure o’ risin’ early is no’ to gan to bed at a’. We started doon below the race-tail atween eleeven and twelve o’clock, and had gey fair sport and killed a few fine troots. But that wasna what I cam’ oot for. Ye see, i’ the afternoon I was doon at thae flat rocks below the Skew Ford. Thinkin’ it a likely place, I

lay doon and keeked into the water, and there, sure enough, close in by the side o' the rock, and maybe a yard under ma nose, lay a fine falla, a saumon—a twenty-punder if an ounce. Says I to him, “Danged if I dinnet hae ye, ma man, if ye're there th' night.” So, without sayin' a word to Dick, I smuggled out a leister\* and a lang cleek,† and hid them amang the bushes. It was a fine night, bright meunlight, wi' a few clouds now and then, and after fiddlin' on wi' the troots a bit, I could stand it nae langer, and pulled oot the leister and cleek. When Dick saw them he was in a tarrible way. No, *he* wud run nae sic risks, not him. He wus flaid, I think, mair for his feyther's sake than his ain. But when he see'd me lie down ma lang length on the rock and take up the leister, he couldna help comin' up ahint me to see. I slid the leister cannily into the water till I thought the prongs might be maybes a foot abeun the fish—that is, if he was still there. Like enough, I thought, he might be awa' by this time. Hooiver, I let her slip doon slowly for other six inches, and then—bang!—I let her drive. Man, ye never saw sic a commotion! He was there, and nae mistake, and that he let us ken. It was like tryin' to haud doon a little yirthquake. The leister-shank wobbled and bent, and I had sair fash to keep fra coupin' in heed

\* Salmon spear.

† Hook or gaff.

first, till Dick got haud o' the end o' the leister and held on like a man. Then he slid the cleek into ma hand, and I let her slide doon by the side o' the leister till I gat it nicely under the creetor's belly. Then I hauled up leister, cleek and fish a' together, and flung them ower ma shouther. As I made for the bank, the blood and rown kept runnin' doon ma back, and the fish kept skelpin' away wi' his tail like mad. I was glad when I flang him on the grass at last and sat doon to rest a bit.'

Here I interrupted the narrative, for I was dying to hear about the main point—how the stranger had been seen.

'Just ye bide a bit, sir, and I'll come to that,' said Hughie. 'The place where we sat doon was close by the road that leads doon to the ford, and we hadna sitten three minutes when we saw twa men comin' alang, and had just time to hide ahint the bushes afore they cam' to where we were. We hadna even time to click up the fish, but luckily we had the leister and things i' wor hands. Yen o' the gentlemen was Mr. Simon, the ither I didna ken, but he pulled oot a whustle, and blew a lang blast, and after a bit we sees a callant come ridin' the water, wi' a led horse, and that horse was Blackcock. Hoo did I ken, did ye say? Think ye I wadna ken Blackcock, as had him in hand sin' he

was foaled amaist, and the meun shinin' bright as day? Yes, it was Blackcock, and nae mistake about it. Weel, the stranger mounted him, and awa' ower the water wi' the callant, and Mr. Simon stood watchin' till they gat across. Then he turns and spies the fish lyin', shinin' like siller, i' the meunlight. He looked at it for a bit, and turned it ower wi' his foot. Then he mumbled somethin' about otters, and went off hame.'

'Have you told anybody about this?' I asked.

'Nane but yersel', Mr. Falconar.'

'And Dick Wetherby, do you think he is likely to say anything?'

'Not him,' answered Hughie. 'He's ower tarrified for fear it comes oot—the killin' the salmon oot o' season, I mean. The donnart, to fash hissel' about a bit fish.'

For all that, I sent the little man to see Dick, and enjoin him to keep the secret of the stranger's visit on pain of the Squire's severe displeasure. As for Hughie, he readily enough undertook to hold his tongue.

I returned home in an excited frame of mind. The more I thought the more I was assured that stirring events were at hand—events in which I joyed to think that I, as well as others, would probably be called upon to play some part.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SQUIRE PLACES A CHARGE IN MY HANDS.

ON the afternoon of the same day, Mr. Thurston returned from the expedition on which he had been absent, and evidently brought some news of importance, for he was closeted with the Squire and Simon for some two hours. The interview had not lasted long when George was sent for, and despatched with a letter to a neighbour living some eight miles away.

I was for going with him, but he told me his father had sent word I was to stay within call, as he wished to see me. I was thus left to my own devices, for Miss Belliston was busied about her household concerns, so, putting on my hat, I strolled into the north garden, there to wait until I was summoned.

The north garden was a favourite haunt of Mr. Thurston's, and many a pleasant hour had I spent with him there, listening as he told some stirring

old-time story, or recited some of his favourite ballads. The place he most loved to frequent was a little arbour overgrown with honeysuckle, where, sitting with green leaves all about, one could see the old ivy-grown tower and the north wing of the house rising above the intervening fruit trees. Mr. Thurston's talk at such times often turned upon the rising of the 'Fifteen,' in which, as I have before said, he had been 'out' along with the Squire and several of our neighbours and friends. One of these was big Jock Corbitt, the same who first brought me to Netherdyke. From the summer-house, half-way down the garden path, could be seen the rustic seat called by us 'The Earl's Chair.' Mr. Thurston was never tired of telling how the young Earl of Derwentwater, during a visit paid to Netherdyke only a few months before his fatal enterprise, had been fond of sitting upon this chair, and how ever since his death it had been looked upon as something almost sacred, and not to be profaned by further use.

This afternoon, as I paced restlessly up and down the trim box-edged garden walks, my predominant feeling was one of mortification that I had not been called in to hear what was being discussed in the oak parlour. Something important it was, I made no doubt—something relating to the great enterprise



which I felt sure was now on the eve of being attempted—the great enterprise in which I had made up my mind I was to take part. And here I was, shut out, as though I was not worthy of confidence! My only consolation lay in the thought that the Squire had said he wished to see me, and the hope that when he did so he would open his mind, and take me into his confidence.

I was about returning to the house when I saw one of the French windows of the oak parlour thrown open, and the Squire and Mr. Thurston come forth, the one in his gold-laced green coat and laced hat, the other in his sober suit of snuff colour.

‘Well, Gil,’ cried the Squire when he saw me, ‘I would have some talk with you. But let us go on. We can talk here as well as indoors, and the air is cooler and more pleasant.’

He paced slowly forward, his head bent as in thought, Mr. Thurston and I accompanying him. Thus we went on until we reached the Earl's Seat. As the Squire's eye fell upon it, I saw his countenance change, and it was with a troubled expression that he looked at Mr. Thurston. Doubtless the sight had called up unpleasant recollections of a past undertaking, and suggested evil forebodings concerning the one now in contemplation. So I have thought since. At the time I was too much excited,

too full of hope and expectation, to think much about it.

‘We were talking of you but now,’ said the Squire at length. ‘There is something I would fain have you do—a charge I would place in your hands.’

My heart gave a great bound. Now it was coming—the time for which I had longed—and at last I was to be taken into confidence.

‘It is concerning a matter which I have somewhat too long delayed,’ he continued. ‘It should have been attended to before. But better late than never.’

I heartily agreed with this, as may be supposed, but said nothing. He went on :

‘We have been talking seriously, and have come to the conclusion that it is high time both George and yourself had a change. The two of you are wasting good time, shut up here, when you ought to be getting to know something of the world. It will never do that you should grow up into mere country louts, fit for nothing except to follow the hounds or shoot black game by day, and play cards and drink round of a night. You are now in your twentieth year, both of you, and I, as George’s father and your guardian, must see that you become acquainted with something more becoming gentlemen. What say you, Thurston?’

Mr. Thurston bowed his head in approval, but said nothing. As for me, I wondered what was coming next.

‘Therefore we have resolved,’ continued my guardian, ‘that you shall both start forthwith for Oxford, whither Mr. Thurston will accompany you and see you settled. That is our plan.’

I was struck all of a heap with astonishment and disappointment. I saw it all in a moment: the meeting in the oak parlour, the sending away of George—a family plot to get us out of the way. My pride revolted. After all, then, I was held as not fit to be trusted—perhaps considered so unworthy or pusillanimous that I had to be smuggled out of my share in the coming struggle and the coming danger. George might do as they wished him if he thought proper, which was unlikely. As for me, I should remain, or, if obliged to leave Netherdyke itself, would remain at hand, ready to join my friends when the push came. With tears of indignation in my eyes, I burst forth with all this, forgetting, in my excitement, my habitual obedience to my old kinsman.

He did not seem displeased; on the contrary, he smiled and patted me approvingly on the shoulder.

‘The right spirit, Gil, my lad,’ said he, with something of pride in his tone—‘the right spirit;

and I never doubted it in your mother's son. What I had not guessed was that your head had been so shrewd as to lay you so close on the scent of our intentions. Your heart is stout enough, but I would know if it is tender, too—tender and true enough to urge you to deny yourself, and so serve one friend and save another ?'

'How, sir? What do you mean?' I asked.

'To serve me and save George is what I mean. Should you refuse to go to Oxford, George will not go either, and I fain would keep him from all entanglement in the matter which is toward. As for me, my duty to the King my master, my duty to my friends who look to me, calls me forth. Besides, I am an old man, and what matters a few years more or less of life? But George——'

'And think you, sir,' I broke in, 'that George would for a moment think of consenting, when he knows of what is going forward, to skulk amongst books and bookworms, instead of flying to your side to share your toil and peril? What of *his* duty to the King his master? What of mine?'

The Squire was troubled, and glanced towards Mr. Thurston, who stood gravely by all this time. Thus appealed to, he came to his friend's aid.

'You of the younger generation, Gilbert,' said he quietly, 'are not bound by the same ties as your

elders. You have been born, and have lived your lives under the new state of things, and cannot be expected to feel as we do. You speak of your duty. I tell you plainly, I consider your first duty is towards your old friend and mine, Mr. Belliston. He would save his son from risking both life and estate for what, to him, can be only an idea.'

'It fills me with astonishment, Mr. Thurston,' I cried, 'to hear you talk like this after the so different tenor of your whole converse and teaching all these years. It makes me both sorry and sad. What are estates, what are lives, in such a cause? But talk as you will and do as you will, I know full well that George, if he goes, will return at the first news of danger to his father. Of that I am sure.'

'And that is why I ask your aid,' said the Squire. 'That is the charge I would place in your hands: to go with him and keep from him, as long as possible, all news which might precipitate the action you so justly foresee. Who knows but what we may meet with early success, and by the time he reaches us all danger may be over? Now, Gilbert, my dear lad—for dear you are and have been to me, scarce less so than my own son, for whose sake I plead—I ask you, have I to implore you in vain, or will you do this thing for me?'

He had taken my hand, and, holding it, looked earnestly into my face, his eyes brimming with tears. Before that appeal from my dear old friend what could I do? I had hung down my head, but now, looking up and returning the grasp of his hand, I consented.

## CHAPTER VII.

### OF THE PHŒNIX INN, ITS HOSTESS AND HER 'MISCREANT HERO.'

WE set out on our journey the very next day, so feverishly anxious was the Squire that no time should be lost. We had intended going by Carlisle and the west route, but at Hexham we were overtaken by Hughie Dagg, who brought a letter from the Squire instructing us to change our plan and proceed by way of Newcastle. It was at the Phœnix Inn, where we were used to put up when in Hexham, that we received this letter. Mr. Thurston was manifestly troubled by its receipt, for it was by his advice that the west route had been decided on, Simon Belliston's urgent recommendation of the opposite direction notwithstanding. After our departure the latter had talked his brother over and gained his point, so we found out long afterwards.

The Phœnix was kept by one John Cook and his wife, who had been at one time cook at Netherdyke.

She was a notable woman was Mrs. Ann Cook, buxom of figure, brisk and energetic to a degree, and the best cook in all Northumberland. She was the life and soul of the business of the house which, with the assistance of her two young daughters, she carried on, leaving her husband little else to do except look after the posting and outside work. On some such business he happened to be absent when we arrived, but we were received with every demonstration of welcome by the mistress of the house, and conducted upstairs to a private sitting-room.

This room was to the front of the house, a pleasant, comfortably-furnished apartment. Upon the walls, beside the samplers worked by Mrs. Cook and her daughters, hung sundry pictures of fish and game painted in oils. Over the mantelshelf was a printed handbill, announcing that Hexham Races would be held on Tyne Green on September 25, and that horses could be shown and entered at the house of John Cook, at the sign of the Phœnix. We read this bill with considerable interest, for we had been thinking of entering the new horse, Cheviot, for one of the races. The difficulty was to find someone in whose name to run him ; for, if shown publicly as the property of one of Mr. Belliston's known views, he stood a chance of being pounced upon and confiscated as being above standard value.



Presently the cloth was laid for dinner, and, after Mrs. Cook had apologized for what she termed the poor and hastily prepared repast, we sat down to table, and a very good dinner we made. First of all, we had some most excellent hare-soup, followed by a dish of fresh burn trout, fried crisp and brown with oatmeal; then we had collared beef, with pickled Dutch cabbage, and a white fricassee of chicken; and after these gooseberry-pudding, with cream. For drink we had both white wine and red port, and we all concluded that our hostess's apology was quite unnecessary.

Before we had finished, Hughie Dagg arrived with the Squire's letter to Mr. Thurston, and another, which he was to carry to a certain Mr. Peter Pacegate, in Newcastle. Following him came our baggage, in charge of two servants, who were to take our horses back to Netherdyke. For the rest of our journey we were to ride post, all but Hughie, who would ride his own mount—one of the Farneycleugh breed, of course.

It had been the Squire's most particular instruction, when taking leave of us, that we were to keep as much to ourselves as possible, so that public attention should not be unduly attracted to our movements. He was anxious that our journey should not be delayed; and there was no knowing,

at that time when party feeling ran so high, what might be the effect of any chance rencounter with those of the opposite side. So, after dinner, instead of strolling out into the town, or even mixing with the other guests in the house, we sat quietly in our room until such time as we should resume our journey. While so doing, we had a diversion lively enough.

Mr. Thurston was dozing in his chair, and George and I sat over our wine, talking softly together for fear of awaking him, when an exclamation from Hughie Dagg, and the noise of a commotion in the street outside, drew us all to the window. The casement was thrown open, for the afternoon was warm, and, looking out, we saw a crowd of excited people before the house, and in the centre of it a stout, red-faced man, dressed like a gentleman, very palpably in liquor. We noticed that, while some of the people laughed and cheered, others looked angry and cried shame, as this man stood blustering and vapouring and flourishing his walking-cane in the direction of the doorway of the inn, which was just beneath us. He was reviling someone who stood there; and soon we knew who it was, when we heard the voice of our hostess, rising shrill and clear above the hubbub of the crowd and the noise of her adversary.

‘For shame!’ she was crying. ‘You, to call yourself a gentleman and a justice of the peace! A fine justice of the peace, indeed, to come here brawling and affronting a woman when you know her man is away at Newcastle on circuit business!’

‘On circuit business, is he?’ cried the man. ‘I’ll soon give him some circuit business he won’t relish. I’ll have the law on him, and I’ll bring both him and thou to a dry morsel yet.’

‘Best go and take a dry morsel thyself, Esquire Flash,’ retorted the dame. ‘Perhaps it may help to sober thee, and that thou stands need on.’

Here some of the bystanders shouted with glee, as at a home-thrust indeed; and the man, steadying himself, and evidently striving to concoct a telling rejoinder, happened to look upwards, and his eye fell on us. He took off his gold-laced hat, and bowed with drunken gravity; but, seeing that we took no notice to return his salute, his manner changed, and he commenced to swear at us for a set of cursed Papists and Jacobites.

Now was poor Mr. Thurston in a pickle, for we three younger men made for the door, our purpose being to go down and chastise the fellow for his insolence. Our old friend kept holding us back, and when we broke loose, calling after us for God’s sake to come back, and saying that Mrs. Cook

could very well hold her own where words only were concerned, and that it would be time enough to interfere when it came to blows. All this we knew, however, was only called forth by the promise he had made the Squire to keep us out of scrapes. In his heart we felt he was as much for going as any of us. But, after all, his concern proved to be groundless, for by the time we reached the front door the fellow had taken himself off, and the crowd had dispersed.

Our hostess, still fuming and bridling, told us all about her tormentor, and certainly did not spare him in the recital. From her account this 'miscreant hero,' for thus she termed him, was a man of some means and position in the town, a magistrate, too, as she had said before, and so, of course, a supporter of the Hanoverian Government. He was addicted to strong drink, was of a quarrelsome, vindictive disposition, and for some paltry reason or unreason had taken a violent dislike to her husband. He had used every means at his disposal to the disadvantage of John Cook. Thus he exerted all his influence to prevent customers using the house, and to hinder public dinners, meetings, and such-like from being held in it. He had sworn again and again to be the ruin of the inn-keeper, and never lost an opportunity of hinting or asserting

that he was a Jacobite and a harbourer of the disaffected.

This last remark set me thinking that it was just as well we had not been embroiled with him, for it would have given him a fresh handle against our host, seeing how well known were the political leanings of the Bellistons. But, as it turned out, though he had gone, he was yet to be the cause of more mischief and more uneasiness to us before we left the Phœnix.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HUGHIE DAGG DRINKS THE KING'S HEALTH.

SCARCELY had the excitement caused by the appearance of the tipsy magistrate subsided, than it was renewed by another cause. There were a good many people in the house downstairs, and the sounds of their talking and revelry could be plainly heard where we were. Suddenly a new sound which came floating upwards caused Hughie Dagg to start to his feet and make for the door again. It was a long-drawn strain of music, the familiar drone of the Northumbrian small-pipes.

Now, Master Hughie had all along been fretful at being detained in a quiet room, when he would much rather have been elsewhere, enjoying the pleasures of the town, and it had required all Mr. Thurston's powers of persuasion to prevent his sallying out. To hinder him from yielding to the sweet seduction of the pipes must have gone sorely against the grain with our old friend, for he himself

was an ardent lover of the instrument, and no mean performer. Nevertheless, he constrained the ardent little man to remain for the time being, but we could see his own solemn eyes light up and his usually pale face grow paler still with emotion as the piper glided off into his favourite air of 'Chevy Chase,' the music now swelling out with martial ardour as calling men to battle, now plaintive, like the wail of women who mourn the slain. Hughie was quiet for some time, and seemed to have reconciled himself to stay; but when the air changed, and the piper with spirit blew up 'Little wot ye wha's comin',' he sprang to his feet again, and, snapping his fingers over his head, broke forth into the words of the song:

'Little wot ye wha's comin';  
Derwentwater and Forster's comin';  
Witherington and Nairn's comin'.

'Little wot ye wha's comin';  
Bonnie Bowrie's comin'.'

'D'ye hear that?' he cried. 'Bonnie Bowrie's comin'. The auld Squire o' the Bower. I'se awa' doon, bide ahint wha may.'

And with that he vanished, followed by George, who had become almost as excited as himself. I was as eager as either, and as for Mr. Thurston, there was nothing for it but to go too, if only to

bring back the runaways, so, almost before we knew it, we were down the stair, and at the open door of the room from whence the music came. It was a pretty large room, with a sanded stone floor, and with plain wooden tables and forms. These latter, as well as the long settle by the fireside, were filled by a noisy company. There were many mugs and glasses standing about, and a goodly cloud of tobacco smoke filled the room, in one corner of which stood the piper, who was just finishing his tune. There was a great rapping of mugs and sticks on the table, and other sounds of approval, and Hughie was just on the point of entering when Mr. Thurston, all breathless, came up and caught him by the arm.

‘Not in there!’ he gasped. ‘If you must be downstairs come into the other room. We can hear there just as well, and it will be quieter.’

We entered a room across the passage which proved to be the parlour of the inn. It was furnished in better style than the other, having a long mahogany table, black and shining with age and much polishing, with comfortable chairs and a great stuffed settle to match. The company too, consisting of some half score, was of a superior class, being apparently tradesmen and farmers, who made room for us, and passed the compliments of the day very civilly.

Presently we heard the pipes strike up a tune



which caused Hughie and George to beam with delight, and Mr. Thurston to shift very uneasily in his seat as he watched them. It was the famous old Jacobite marching tune of the Fenwicks of Wallington, 'Sir John Fenwick's the flower among them,' and after it had been half played through the piper suddenly stopped, and there was the noise as of some altercation. Then the tune was resumed, and just then the mistress of the house burst in upon us in a state of great excitement.

'Eh, sirs!' she cried. 'We will be undone if this cannot be put a stop to. Here they are egging on poor Willy to play "Sir John Fenwick," and all I can do I cannot get him to stop. What am I to do, and my good man away? If that miscreant hero gets to hear on't—you know well whee I mean—it will be fair pie for him. Mr. Robson, can you not help a poor distracted woman?'

'Deed and I can and wull!' cried a burly, strong-looking man, laying down his pipe and striding out of the room, the whole company flocking after to see the upshot.

Robson marched straight up to the piper where he stood still playing, and snatched the chanter from his hands, thus effectually stopping him.

'Now, friends,' he cried, as Willy feebly struggled to regain the chanter, 'I call ye o' to witness that I

do this at Mrs. Cook's request. It's a bonny enough tune, but that's not to say but it might get Cook turned oot o' the Phoenix if it cam' to some folk's ears that it was allowed to be played here. Ye ken whee I mean, maist o' ye; and thou best of o', Kit Lant.'

He looked here towards a down-looking, squint-eyed fellow who sat rather apart from the rest. There were some cries of angry remonstrance, but more of approval at this high-handed interference with the company's amusement, in the midst of which Robson addressed the piper.

'Now, Wully,' said he, 'see and behave yorsel' if ye bide here. But if ye like to step into the parlour and give us a stave ye shall have that.'

He pulled out a shilling as he spoke, and the piper grinned and made at once for the other room. When we had resumed our seats, George Belliston called out to the waiter to bring in half a dozen bottles of claret, whereat there was a great buzz of applause. While the glasses were being filled, I noticed the man Lant, who had followed us into the room, whispering into the ear of the half-witted piper, and instantly that worthy began to roar out a well known old song. These were the words:

'Here's a health unto his Majesty,  
With a fal-la-la-la-la-la-la.  
Confusion to his enemies,  
With a fal-la-la-la-la-la-la-la.

And he that will not drink his health  
I wish him neither wit nor wealth,  
Nor yet a rope to hang himself,  
With a fal-la-la-la-la-la-la.'

There was some applause, but most of those present looked uneasy, and the moment the song was finished Lant jumped to his feet. But Robson anticipated him by crying out at the top of his voice—and a very loud and strong voice it was:

'Gentlemen!' he cried, 'His Majesty the King!'

'The King!' shouted all, standing up and raising their glasses, some with a sigh of relief that no particular king was specified. This did not suit Lant.

'Hold, gentlemen!' he cried, 'I have a word to add before you drink.'

'Nivver mind him,' roared Robson. 'Whee asked him in here, ony way?'

'It's a public room, I suppose, and I have as much right here as another,' was the retort. 'Mr. Belliston asked us all to drink at his expense. Have I his permission to add a word before this toast is drunk?'

'Certainly,' cried George good-naturedly, in spite of Mr. Thurston's warning look.

'Then, gentlemen,' said Lant, 'let us drink Mr. Robson's toast, "To his Majesty the King," with

all my heart—to his Majesty King George, that is—and confusion to his enemies.'

He accompanied his speech with a most offensive leer, intended for Robson, but, owing to his obliquity of vision, seeming to be directed at Hughie Dagg. That worthy, therefore, supposed the toast to be specially levelled at himself, and, while most there paused and stood irresolute with their untasted glasses in their hands, he came to the relief of their embarrassment.

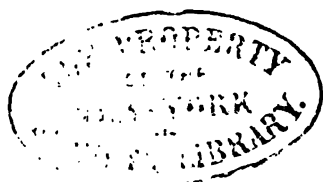
'What!' he cried, in a boiling rage. 'Is't me ye're askin' to drink the health o' yer bit pug-nosed King, and looking as if ye thought I daurna refuse, ye snivellin' cock-eyed, hickory-faced loon? Sees'ta. To the de'il wi' King George and a' his Whiggish crew, and ye amang them! Here's to the health o' King James, God bless him!'

The whole company rose in consternation, and Mrs. Cook, who had just come in, was fairly overwhelmed with dismay. Hughie Dagg, after draining his glass to the bottom, made a rush at Lant, and we had to hold him back by main force until the spy had slunk out of the room.

Said Robson, 'I'd advise ye to keep a sharp look-out, Hughie Dagg, or better still, get away as soon as ye can, for it's like ye'll hear mair o' this afore lang.'

'Yes,' said the hostess. 'That villainous spy-teller has been sent here, I feel sure, on purpose to make mischief by that other arch-miscreant, his master. He'll be straight off to him now to lay an information. One comfort, he'll be that drunk by this time, he'll not be able to sign a warrant.'

With that we bid her good-bye, and took the road for Newcastle, hoping that no mischief might befall her through Hughie's indiscretion.



## CHAPTER IX.

### OF NEWCASTLE AND WHAT TOOK PLACE THERE.

IT was evening when we rode through the west gate of Newcastle, and made straight for the White Hart Inn in the Flesh Market, hard by the great church of St. Nicholas. Here, after seeing our horses put up and attended to, we made a slight repast. Then Hughie Dagg departed to deliver the Squire's letter to Mr. Peter Pacegate, while we went to pay our respects to Mrs. Farnaby, the Squire's sister.

The Farnabys' house was a commodious and elegant building of four stories, situated in Pilgrim Street. We were shown into a handsome room on the ground-floor, very rich in its new-fashioned appointments, and very lofty and light-looking compared with the low-ceiled and heavily-wainscoted rooms we had been accustomed to at home. Presently Mrs. Farnaby came to us, and welcomed us most heartily, though she was surprised, and at first a little alarmed, at our unexpected appear-

ance, thinking we might have brought bad news. While we were answering her inquiries about her brothers and sister, and all at Netherdyke, her daughter Kate entered the room, no longer the romping, merry girl we had known four years ago, but a slender, stately young lady, perfectly self-possessed, and with every sign of breeding and elegant manners.

If I could not describe Kate Farnaby's beauty as a child, how can I describe it now that it had ripened and expanded into the beauty of perfect womanhood? I can only say that the sight of her came as a shock and a surprise, so dazzling was her beauty. If she had looked like a fairy when last we saw her, with her golden hair flowing in shining ripples over her shoulders, now she looked more like an angel than anything else, as she appeared before us, clad in some soft material of milky white, her glistening locks confined in more decorous fashion than of yore, and forming a frame of richest gold to her matchless face.

George Belliston seemed to be affected in the same way as myself, for he blushed and stammered, and quite lost his usual self-possession while his cousin was greeting us with words of welcome. Mrs. Farnaby, I could see, smiled at his confusion, as though not displeased to see it.

‘And now,’ said she, ‘I will give you a dish of tea, and you shall have it in the open air, the same as you are used to have it at Netherdyke. We are not quite so much cooped up here in town as you country people might suppose.’

With that she led us to a charming garden at the back of the house, where, under the shade of trees, we drank tea and looked down upon a pleasant slope of verdure at the foot of which ran a little stream, beyond which rose a grassy bank topped by the town wall with its towers and turrets. After a pleasant time spent here in the twilight, we went indoors again, and, the master of the house coming home soon after, we sat down to supper in the handsome and spacious dining-room, the windows of which looked out upon the busy street.

It was with no little curiosity we met Mr. Farnaby, that is to say George and I. Mr. Thurston had seen him frequently, but George had only seen him once before, and that when he was a mere child, while it was my first meeting with him. I must say that I was somewhat prejudiced against him, as I was prejudiced against all of the Whiggish party, but whatever he may have been in public life and in business, in his own house and at the head of his table his manners were charming and completely won me over. Long before supper was over we were



all on the best of terms, and I thought my Whig monster not such a bad sort of fellow after all. When he heard of our intentions towards Oxford he expressed himself as heartily glad, and said it was the best thing we could possibly do to go there, and when we talked of lying that night at the White Hart he would not hear of it; we must stop at his house if we would not offend him, and so finally it was arranged.

I have often noticed through life that when all one's plans seem going smoothly and well, when we are hugging ourselves with the idea that all is assured, then it is that some unforeseen obstacle crops up to thwart us. So it was upon this occasion. All seemed favourable towards the Squire's plan of getting us out of the way. There seemed nothing more to do than wait for morning, and then make a start. Mr. Thurston, good man, looked upon his task as almost accomplished, and leaned back complacently in his chair with the air of one well pleased with himself, while Kate Farnaby sang an old ballad for his special delectation, accompanying herself on the spinet. George sat listening in a rapture, his eyes fastened on the fair singer's face, and Mrs. Farnaby was busied with some needlework. But even while this quiet little scene was enacting, something was taking place elsewhere, which, trifling enough in itself, was

yet the beginning of a chain of circumstances destined to sadly disarrange our plans.

Mr. Farnaby had been a few minutes before summoned from the room, and just as Kate was ending her song he returned, looking rather annoyed.

'Here's a fine to-do!' he cried. 'Mrs. Hill of the White Hart sends word that one of the Netherdyke horses has been seized at her house and carried off as being over statute value. It has been taken, and also the young man who rode it. You did not tell me you had brought anyone with you, Thurston.'

We rose in dismay, supposing that the warrant of the tipsy magistrate had been sent on from Hexham and that Hughie had been arrested on it. In a few minutes we, accompanied by Mr. Farnaby, were at the White Hart and listening to the hostess's account of what had happened.

'You see,' she said, 'young Hughie would keep on bragging about his horse, and took Sam Fewster, the horse-couper, to the stable to see it. Some others followed them, and when the young man let out that he came straight from Netherdyke, somebody must have sneaked off and laid an information, for in comes a couple of messengers and seizes the nag on a warrant. And I say it's a shame and a bizen that honest gentlemen's cattle cannot be

allowed to stand safely in the stable of a decent house. But here comes young Mr. Dagg.'

Here Hughie entered, a broad grin on his face.

'It's be a' right i' the morning,' said he. 'It was nae use argying wi' them that the beast's mine and no' Mr. Belliston's. Nobbut a waste o' time and wind. Sandy Bradley'll put it a' right. He's an auld friend o' wors, and I've seen him ye now.'

And so it turned out, for Bradley, the farrier who was called to value the horse, set it down as below statute price. As Hughie termed it, he had 'winked his eye.' Early next morning, as soon as we heard of this, I went to the White Hart with a letter which Mrs. Farnaby wished Hughie to carry back with him to Netherdyke.

'Ma sang,' said he, as he took the letter, 'but Netherdyke's gey thrang i' the letter way ye now. Here's this yen and the yen fra Mr. Peter Pacegate, and here's anither. What think ye o' that? Ye'll nivver i' the warld guess wha its fra.'

He showed me as he spoke a letter, addressed simply 'To my Friend.' I looked at him, waiting for an explanation.

'Last night, after ye had gane awa', said he, 'a bit callant comes here and asks for Mr. Dagg fra Netherdyke. *Mr.* Dagg, ye'll mind! There's for ye! He said a man wanted to see me, so I went

wi' him to the High Brig and into a hoose there. And, losh man, wha did I find there waitin' but the stranger that rade Blackcock that night at the Skew Ford. I never let on I kenn'd him, ye may be sure; and when he said wad I carry a letter for Mr. Belliston and see that he gat it th' day, I just said yes. And what think ye o' that, Mr. Gilbert ?'

What I thought I kept to myself. Events were evidently marching apace. The Squire's haste to get George packed off, the urgency for the delivery of this letter, both pointed to the probability of some early movement. I looked enviously after Hughie as he rode off, wishing that I, like him, was going back to Netherdyke instead of seeking inglorious safety in the South.

Going along the High Bridge, I noticed two men standing talking in a doorway. As I passed one of them stepped out a little into the causeway, and I saw his face, and recognised it at once. Hughie had been right; it was the face of the stranger of the Long Room—the same pale face I had seen in the moonlight, with its black beard and heavy eyebrows. As I passed I heard him say something to the other man, whose face I could not see, for he was within the doorway, something which went to my heart like a knife.

'He is on the road with the letter by this time,'

was what he said. 'To-morrow we shall lay the pig-headed old gentleman by the heels.'

'Thank God for that!' said the other; and I was startled still more when I heard his voice, for it sounded strangely familiar to me. A great flush of blood seemed to fly to my head as I heard it; then I thought I must surely be mistaken, the voice could not be his of whom I thought. But it was all-important that I must make sure. I turned and looked back. The stranger was still standing near the door, and a figure was just upon the point of vanishing round the corner of the street. It must have been that of the other man, for as I repassed the doorway the stranger was alone. I hurried on after the other, but when I had reached the corner he was nowhere to be seen. Anxiously I ran on, thinking to gain sight of him, but in vain. He must have gone into some house; yet, after all, it did not matter so much, for I was perfectly certain in my own mind that the voice I had heard was that of James Farnaby.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE STRANGER'S LETTER.

I CANNOT describe the state of alarm, perplexity and anger into which I was thrown by what I had heard. Could it be possible that the stranger, the man Mr. Belliston had described as coming at the risk of life to do him a service, the trusted messenger of our party, was a traitor and spy in the pay of the opposite side, and that the letter he had sent was intended to lead my old kinsman into a trap? And even if so could it be possible that James Farnaby was so vile a man as to have a hand in this plot against his wife's brother? And yet what other construction could be put upon the conversation I had overheard? I recalled many instances I had heard of in which party spirit had impelled men to deeds of treachery, quite inconsistent with their usual conduct, and came to the conclusion that it was so in this case. Clearly, then, my duty was

plain—I must, without losing a moment, get back to Netherdyke and warn Mr. Belliston.

Not so plain, however, was it as to how I should get away without exciting suspicion in the mind of James Farnaby. In my heart I now cursed his forced hospitality, for had we been at the inn all might have been easy. Another difficulty was that they were only awaiting my return to start on our journey, the horses had even been sent round to the house. Should I not return, George would probably refuse to go, and I knew how much his father's heart was set upon his departure. I returned to the White Hart and sent a note to Mr. Thurston, saying that pressing and sudden business called me to leave the town, but that he was not to delay his departure on that account, for I would overtake them before they got very far on their way. This was my true intention at the time, but in my heart I confess there was a secret hope that it might never be carried out.

I got one of Mrs. Hill's horses and set out, my intention being to join Hughie Dagg on the road if possible. I knew he would not travel by way of Hexham, so struck the Ponteland road, and had the good fortune to overtake him at that village. Then together we rode on, and in due time reached Netherdyke, where my unexpected return caused

some astonishment, as may be supposed, still more my story of the cause of it.

It was received in different ways by the three people to whom I told it. Miss Belliston would not believe that it was James Farnaby I had overheard. She had her sister's letter, filled with kindest love and good wishes, and would not have it that the husband of the writer could be capable of the treachery which my tale suggested. The Squire, on the other hand, said he would believe anything of a Whig like Farnaby, but that Buchanan, the stranger (for the first time now I heard his name), must have been speaking of someone else when I heard him, or that perhaps I was mistaken, and it was not our visitor I had seen after all. Simon listened to both opinions before he gave his own.

'It's just as I suspected all along,' said he. 'Whether Farnaby's in it or not, it's a Hanoverian plot, you may depend upon it. I don't believe that fellow who was here was Buchanan at all. We know the real Buchanan to be true and tried, but we have never seen him, and this is only a device of the Whigs, I feel assured. I should advise you to have nothing to do with it. But let us see what the letter says.'

The letter was opened, and all it said was :



‘DEAR FRIEND,

‘The hour is six, and the day seven. You know the place already.’

The Squire took a paper from his pocket, and compared the writing upon it with the letter.

‘Yes,’ said he; ‘it is the same handwriting as the cipher key he left. The hour is six; that means twelve o’clock noon. The day is seven; that means—why, it means to-morrow!—to-morrow at noon I am to be at the place agreed on between us.’

‘But surely you’ll never go and run your head into this trap?’ said Simon.

‘Surely not, dear John!’ cried his sister.

The Squire knit his brows in thought, but did not answer; instead, he broke open the letter sent in answer to his own from the person he had addressed as ‘Peter Pacegate.’

‘We’ll see what honest Ralph says,’ said he.

Now, in those days it was sometimes dangerous to address letters on certain subjects to people by their proper names, and assumed names were used, the messengers knowing where to deliver them. Thus it was that the letter addressed to ‘Peter Pacegate’ was delivered to a certain Ralph Hodgson. We shall meet him again more than once.

‘He says,’ went on the Squire, ‘the business shall

be arranged as I desire, and the money shall be sent as soon as possible. Aha! What's this? He says: "You will be glad to hear that our young friend has got safely home." What think you of *that*, Simon? At last! He's landed, and that decides me. It goes to prove that it was Buchanan who came here after all, for it tallies exactly with what he told me. I'll keep the appointment, come what may.'

'But surely,' cried Simon, in evident concern, 'an you will go you'll never go alone and unattended?'

'Why, man, I cannot ride about the countryside with a troop at my back; that would be to excite suspicion and remark with a vengeance. Besides, the arrangement, as you know, was that I should go alone, or with a servant or two at most, and to go I mean to-morrow.'

'A wilful man must have his way,' said Simon, 'but I fear me much it's only a trap.'

## CHAPTER XI.

### HOW THE SQUIRE WENT TO KEEP HIS APPOINTMENT.

FROM Simon Belliston's conduct regarding his brother's intended journey to keep the appointment set by the stranger, I began to think I had all along been misjudging and wronging him. He, who had ever appeared to be callous and selfish, caring nothing how matters went with others, seemed now to be filled with deep anxiety about his brother. Never did man manifest more concern. He argued and pleaded, and was supported by both his sister and myself. But all would not do. The Squire had made a promise, and meant to keep it. Buchanan, or the person who had said he was Buchanan, had summoned him to attend a meeting of Jacobite gentlemen, and he was to be at a certain spot at a time to be fixed later on. Of this time the letter had given notice, and he was determined to proceed to the place agreed upon, where he

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would be met by a person provided with a password, who would conduct him to the place of meeting.

All that the Squire would concede was that Simon, Hughie Dagg, and myself should accompany him part of the way. At a certain point we were to leave him, and ride on ahead past the point where he was to meet the guide. Should we see anything leading us to suspect foul play we were to ride back and give him timely notice.

Some hours before the time appointed we set forth. The Squire and I rode first, Simon and Hughie Dagg at some distance behind—this to avoid attracting too much attention—and in this order we reached the Roman road called the Watling Street, which runs southwards past Corbridge. This road holds its way for long distances in a perfectly straight line, up hill and down dale, so that looking back we could see our friends far behind, as they breasted the rise of a hill, or again lose sight of them as they dipped into a hollow. At length we reached the slack in the road where we were to leave the Squire, and here pulled up and waited.

‘You’ll not forget what you have promised, Gilbert,’ said my companion. ‘If all turns out well, you go straight on to Newcastle, and thence follow on after George and Mr. Thurston.’

'I'll not forget, sir,' said I ruefully. 'But what if all should not turn out well?'

'Then your action will depend upon what happens. But here come Simon and Hughie.'

With that the two rode up and joined us.

'Have you the time?' asked Simon.

The Squire pulled out his watch.

'It's just turned eleven,' said he.

'Then,' said Simon, 'you'll be too soon at the rendezvous. It's scarce half an hour's ride from here, and it's an exposed place. Had you not better tarry here and give us half an hour's law before you come on? That will give us time to ride ahead a few miles and see what company is on the road beyond the place.'

After some demur the Squire consented to this, and we left him in the hollow. No sooner were we in the next slack, and so out of his brother's sight, than Simon called on us to pull up while he dismounted.

'Here, Gil, hold my horse, will you?' said he. 'And you, Hughie, give me the things.'

Hereupon, Hughie, with a grin at my look of bewilderment, unstrapped from his saddle-bow a bundle I had taken to be his cloak. Simon took off his coat and hat and thrust them under some whin bushes by the roadside. Then he unrolled the

bundle, and in a trice was dressed in an old green coat, a wig, and a hat belonging to his brother, so that when he had remounted and was a little way ahead I could have sworn it was the Squire himself. And now I began to have an inkling of what was intended.

‘Come on, or we shall be late,’ cried Simon. ‘It must be getting near twelve o’clock.’

‘Surely not,’ said I. ‘It cannot be more than the quarter after eleven.’

‘Ay, by the Squire’s watch, perhaps,’ he returned, with one of his peculiar chuckles. ‘But, then, it happens to be half an hour slow.’

Yes, there seemed to be no doubt about it, now, that I had sorely misjudged Simon, for here he was, going into the jaws of danger to save his brother. His design was clearly to impersonate him, and test the good faith of those who had appointed the meeting.

Hughie Dagg, who had clearly well learned his lesson, now called on me to follow him. We left Simon leisurely jogging along the road, and, fetching a compass to the right over the moorland at a full gallop, and keeping as much as possible out of view of the road, we made for a ruined cottage by the wayside, which was the appointed place of meeting. Much to our relief, not a soul was to be seen about,

and we led our horses into the ruins and took up our position to watch what might take place.

Scarcely had we done so when we saw two horsemen approaching from the south, and immediately afterwards Simon Belliston came into view on the north. They met close by where we were, and we saw the two men turn their horses and range up, one on either side of the supposed Squire of Netherdyke. They were both armed with sword and pistol, while Simon carried no weapon except his small sword.

‘It’s a fine day, sir. Are you from Chipchase?’ we heard one of the men say.

‘Yes,’ rejoined Simon, in that slow way of his, pretending not to have heard the question asked him. Even then, he could not resist playing the old tantalizing game, and enjoying the perplexity of his questioner.

‘I said, are you from Chipchase?’ repeated the man.

‘Oh! I beg your pardon. No, I am from Netherdyke.’

This Simon said in a low voice, with a meaning look. Question and answer were, of course, the passwords agreed upon.

‘Then,’ cried the spokesman, as soon as he heard the answer, ‘I have a warrant for your arrest, Mr. Belliston; and you had better come with us quietly,

for we are both armed, and, moreover, have other help within call.'

'A warrant!' cried Simon, affecting astonishment, and raising his voice.

Hughie Dagg handed me the bridle of his horse and stepped out into the road.

'Allow me to say a word to this young man,' said Simon, at the same time dismounting.

Scarce was he out of his saddle than Hughie was into it, and, giving the man who held the bridle a cut over the hand with the butt of his riding-whip which made him instantly loosen his hold, he spurred the horse clear of the group. Both men drew their pistols and covered their prisoner; but Simon stood quite cool and collected, chuckling to himself. They were furious.

'Bring back that horse, sir,' cried he who had been the spokesman. 'Bring it back instantly, or you shall rue it.'

He left the prisoner in charge of his companion, and, pistol in hand, advanced on Hughie Dagg, who had turned and stopped at a little distance.

'Deil a bit!' cried that young man tauntingly. 'Yer warrant says naethin' about a horse, I'se thinkin'. It's for a man, and ye've gotten a man. What mair do ye want? As for pistols, twa can play at that game.'



So saying, he pulled out a huge horse-pistol and levelled it at the man, who stopped short and drew back.

'Nay, nay,' continued Hughie, still covering his man. 'Fair play's a jewel. This horse shall awa' back to Netherdyke unless Mr. Belliston says nay.'

Simon, thus appealed to, shouted out :

'These gentlemen will doubtless find me a mount, seeing they are so desirous of my company. Take the horse back, and tell my brother he is not to fret himself about me. And now, sirs, I am ready to accompany you.'

At a sign from Hughie, I brought out the two horses, mounted my own, and we rode off homewards, leaving Simon with his captors. Looking back, we saw they had been joined by half a dozen more horsemen, who had evidently been waiting a little way off.

They showed no signs of intending to follow us, so we rode gently on, and presently met the Squire coming to keep his appointment.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRIEST'S CHAMBER.

IT may be well supposed that the account of Simon's arrest strongly affected his brother. His indignation knew no bounds. However, there was one consolation—the prisoner would probably be set at liberty as soon as his identity was discovered.

We returned home, and the first thing the Squire did was to despatch Dick Wetherby, of the Mill, to carry certain letters to Newcastle, and bring back tidings as to Simon's fate. He had other work, he said, for Hughie Dagg and myself. The former was sent off to the houses of several neighbours of our way of thinking to apprise them of what had taken place, so that they might be on their guard. Then, after posting men at all the approaches to the house, to give warning in case of any strange arrival, the Squire called me into the oak parlour.

'Now, Gil,' said he, 'I must keep you with me for a few days at least, for I must have someone by

whom I can send confidential messages which may not be put down in writing, and which cannot be entrusted to everybody; and now that both Simon and Thurston are away, I have only you to depend upon.'

I heard this with a joyful heart. Perhaps, after all, my journey South, now postponed, might be altogether foregone, and I might be allowed to stay and take my share in the stirring events I felt sure were shortly to happen. I knew quite well that the veiled expression in the letter of Peter Pacegate—'our young friend has got safely home'—meant nothing more nor less than that Prince Charles Stuart had landed in Britain. I also knew very well what that portended, and my soul rejoiced when I heard my reprieve from banishment. To add to my joy, the Squire, observing that I would need to be well mounted for the work of the next few days, said I had better make use of Cheviot, the new gray horse.

My happiness was almost complete, but my old friend added to it by giving me a further proof of his confidence.

'I have something for you to do,' said he, 'and something to show you. Come with me.'

With that he led me to the Long Room, whither I followed, wondering. Carefully locking the door

on the inside, he made for the cupboard I have mentioned before, and soon I was in possession of the secret of the stranger's hiding-place, which had so much puzzled me before. Drawing first a concealed bolt, he pulled the cupboard, shelves, door and all complete, forward, revealing a doorway behind; and through this we passed into a little chamber contrived partly in the thickness of the wall of the house, and partly in that of the old tower adjoining. On the floor of this chamber lay several bundles of muskets, swords, and pistols, and several boxes of ammunition. Lifting a trap-door in the floor, the Squire disclosed a steep ladder, down which he went, carrying one of the bundles of arms, bidding me follow with as many of the rest as I could carry. I found him standing in a second little chamber at the foot of the ladder, and, by his direction, carried down the remainder of the arms, ascending and descending until all were down below. Then he unbolted a little iron door, which, when we were through it, I found to be one of the sides or cheeks of the great fireplace of the first-floor chamber of the tower. Speedily I carried out the munitions of war, and piled them on the floor, covering them with some of the hay which lay in the place.

'That will do for the present,' said the Squire.  
'It is lucky these things were not in the Priest's

Chamber up there, when we hid that traitor spy in it the other night. He is sure to have told his employers of it, and it will be the first place they will search should I not be in the house when they come, as they are sure to do as soon as they find out they have got hold of the wrong man. I will see that Hughie has these things carried off to a safe place as soon as he comes back. He cannot be long now. So you had better mount as soon as I have given you the message you are to carry, and the names of those you are to carry it to.'

'But what if the messengers should come to take you when I am away?' I cried in alarm.

He smiled.

'I don't suppose your being here would make much difference,' said he; 'but have no fear. Our pickets will give the alarm, and I will have Roland put into the tower-stable, ready saddled, so that on the first sign of the rascals coming, I can slip out through the North Wood, and so away. Should you, on your return, find me gone, I shall be at the Bower, so you will know where to find me. Should I still be undisturbed, you had better stable Cheviot beside Roland, so that we may both be ready to bolt.'

A proud man I was that afternoon as I mounted the gallant gray, and rode off on my mission. When I returned it was dark, and Hughie Dagg had all

the arms carried off and concealed where they were very unlikely to be discovered. Then the indefatigable little man mounted again to take charge of the men on the look-out against surprise. Secure in his vigilance, the Squire and I supped with his sister, who was in a rather nervous state, as might have been expected considering the events of the day. When she had retired, the Squire and I sat far into the night talking, and, to my increasing delight and pride, he opened out his heart to me and told me of his plans, his hopes, and his fears. So I was taken into full confidence at last, and no longer felt myself to be a sort of outsider. One thing he said, however, rather cast a damper on my elation.

‘Of course, as soon as Simon gets back, you must be off after George and Thurston, Gil.’ These were the words.

‘I’m sorry the old Squire was away when you called at the Bower to-day,’ he continued. ‘I should have liked a reply to the message I sent. But never mind, we will ride over together to-morrow, and see him. And now let us get a wink of sleep.’

We slept where we were—in the oak parlour—and in our clothes, booted and spurred, the Squire in his great armchair and I on the settle, wrapped in a plaid—a very good bed, too, compared with some I slept on not long afterwards.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### BOWRIE.

THERE was no alarm during the night, so after breakfast the Squire and I mounted, and set off for the Bower. It was a delightful morning, only very hot, the sun shining out fiercely from a sky without a cloud. I remember I felt a sense of unusual elation, doubtless caused by the reaction from the uncertainty and suspense of the preceding night, added to the joy of thus riding by the side of my old friend, still free and untrammelled, amidst the scenes we both loved so well.

When we reached the Bower, a comfortable house, like Netherdyke, added on to the remains of an old peel-tower, we were informed by the servants that their master had gone out shooting on the moor, but that he had ordered dinner for twelve o'clock, so we spent the intervening time in looking over the stables, and shortly after noon the old Squire returned.

The Squire of the Bower, generally, from the place of his residence, known as Bowrie, was a few years older than Mr. Belliston. The two were old companions-in-arms, both having been out in the rising of the Fifteen. How Mr. Belliston escaped from Preston has been told. His friend was not so fortunate, for he was taken, and lay in captivity for some time. Eventually he was enlarged, and returned home as full as ever of loyalty to the banished Stuarts, and not at all afraid of letting it be known. He was in some sort a privileged personage on account of his bluff humour and social qualities ; at any rate, he said and did things openly and with impunity the saying or doing of which by anyone else would have speedily landed them in one of the county prisons. He had been signally favoured in the same way some thirty-six years before the time of which I am writing, when he fought a duel with Mr. Widdrington, of Buteland, at Reedswood Scraggs, and killed him on the spot. His enemies would have made it out a murder, but it was nothing of the kind, for his antagonist fell in fair fight, only, unfortunately, there were no seconds present. For this offence Bowrie received the pardon of Queen Anne, under the great seal. His only punishment was that Mr. Widdrington's friends buried him at the door of his (Bowrie's) pew



in Bellingham Church, so that he never again would attend public worship. But, from what I knew of him, I don't think he considered this as any great infliction.

We were in the stable-yard when he arrived. He had taken off his wig, the day being so hot; and as he came towards us, he was mopping his brow with one hand, while in the other he carried his hat and fowling-piece. In person, he was tall, burly of figure, his face ruddy and sunburned, and his dark grayish blue eyes sparkled with good humour and mischief. Behind him came his man, Yeddie Hall, carrying his master's wig, and a goodly load of grouse and black game, the proceeds of the morning's sport. Panting after them, with lolling tongue, came old Don, Bowrie's favourite setting dog, and a particular friend of my own.

'How now, Jack?' cried the master of the Bower, as soon as he saw us, running forward with an agility surprising in a man of his weight and age, and shaking us both heartily by the hand. 'I got your note, Gil; but how comes it you are here? I heard you had gone away. But I thought you'd never go off without coming to say good-bye to old Uncle Bow-wow. And what's come of George that he's not with you?'

We had been used when children to call him

Uncle Bow-wow, which was George's way of pronouncing his name, and had been kept up in fun ever since.

'But come in, come in,' he continued, without waiting to receive a reply. 'Give me my wig, Yeddie, and take in the birds. Whew! it's a gey hot day, and I have a thirst on me I wouldn't take a guinea for.'

With that he led us into the house, and placed his fowling-piece in a corner of the dining-room where it usually stood. Then he went to the sideboard and took down three glasses, calling lustily the while for claret, his deep, sonorous voice causing the crystal on the shelves to ring again. The wine being brought, I, with the freedom of an old acquaintance, would have reached down for my own use a Venice glass, of which several stood on the shelf of the sideboard. It had engraven on it the figure of a rose and an oak, and also a star to show you where to place your lips when drinking, so that the rose might be uppermost. I had often used it or its like before.

'No, no!' shouted Bowrie, filling the three plain glasses he had taken down before. 'None of that, Gil. We'll have no drinking under the rose to-day, considering the news you left yesterday. Openly and without reservation, in plain glass and in plain

English, here's to the health of his Majesty, King James III., and may he soon come to his own again !'

We all drank the toast standing, and another to Prince Charles. Shortly afterwards, dinner was placed on the table—an excellent dinner too, the fish being trout of our host's own killing, the game grouse of his own shooting, and while it was going on we told the story of the arrest of Simon in mistake for his brother.

'Egad, Netherdyke,' said Bowrie, on hearing this, 'we'll all have to look out. And I think you had better stop where you are overnight. If anybody comes to Netherdyke, Gil here can contrive to let us know. You may as well have a quiet night's sleep, and save your people the trouble of watching. What say you ?'

'But what if they should have taken it into their heads to issue a warrant against you, my friend ? I fancy they have as much against you as against me, and so we both might be taken together.'

'Never fear for that. They know me too well to try that game in my own house. I'll not say but what they might attempt it unawares in the open, but here at the Bower ! Never in the world. Why, man, I'd pepper them as soon as they showed their rascally Whiggish noses, and they know it. And

by the way, Gil, do you take the 'Doctor' into the garden and empty him. And mind you don't shoot any of my pigeons, you young dog, or be up to any of your old games. He's loaded with small shot only, but we'll give him a bellyful of Hanoverian pills with which to dose any Whiggish patients who may chance to call.'

'But, my dear Will——' began Netherdyke.

'Do as I tell you, Gil,' cried Bowrie, 'and we'll go to the cellar and smoke a pipe of tobacco and enjoy a cool tankard. Off with you!'

The 'Doctor' was his name for his favourite fowling-piece. It was one of those enormously long-barrelled pieces then in vogue. I took it from the corner where it stood, and left the room, Don, who had been dozing on the floor, eyeing me curiously the while. Arrived in the garden, which lay in front of the dining-room windows, I fired the charge into the air. Immediately following the report there was a great crash of broken glass, and Don came dashing through the window, and clapped down at my feet, evidently expecting me to reload. Doubtless he thought some business was afoot in which he ought to have a share, as he sat there looking up at me with his old nose all bleeding. But when he heard his master's laugh come from the window, a laugh in which I joined, he began to think that he

had evidently done something very silly, and followed me back to the house very sheepishly, with his tail between his legs, for no intelligent dog likes to be made a fool of.

The 'Doctor' having been reloaded, this time with buckshot, we retired to the stone cellar, which was delightfully cool and pleasant after the heat which searched everywhere else. Candles were brought, the two old gentlemen lit their pipes, and the tankards were stood in the shallow cooling well sunk in the stone floor for the purpose. The servants being gone, our host carefully locked the door, and, sitting down, called me to him.

'Your kinsman tells me, Gilbert,' he began, 'that I may speak freely before you, and I am glad that it is so, for when timeworn veterans like ourselves take the field, shame would it be did the young and active hold back. Our cause is one to live and die in, and the time is probably now at hand when we may once more openly espouse it. I hope, though, we shall have better fortune than last time, old comrade.'

Here the two grasped one another by the hand heartily, and were silent for a space. As for me, I was in raptures. After this, there could be no more question of my remaining in the North and taking part in the coming struggle.

'But if the news is true,' continued Bowrie—'and I have no reason to doubt it—that the Prince has landed, we must take extra measures now for our safety, and the safety of our horses, so that we may be able to join him. Little will it boot, however loyal and true our hearts, if when he needs our aid we are clapped behind iron bars. As little use should we be if free, but without horses and arms. Egad, we must not be caught like rats in a trap, one by one!'

'Exactly my opinion,' said the Squire of Netherdyke. 'And that's why this attempted arrest disturbs me so much, and why I came to see and confer with you. Only to think that yesterday, but for poor Simon's self-sacrifice, I might have been shut up and prevented doing anything. Yet, it is difficult to know what to do. We cannot openly take arms in our common defence. A premature rising would spoil all. All we can do is to establish some means of communication whereby any intended arrest may be notified to the parties threatened. Especially we must enlist our friends in the towns in this service. Another thing is, that we communicate with the Prince, assuring him of our support, and asking him how it can be most usefully afforded. We can do no good except by acting in concert with his plans—that is to say, if he has really landed.'

‘We’ll soon know that for certain,’ said Bowrie, ‘and then we will act as you have said. We’ll ride over to Hesleyside this very night, and take counsel of my kinsman. He may have some news.’

Here the sound of horses’ hoofs came faintly to our ears, and we looked inquiringly towards our host.

‘Have no fear,’ said he. ‘It’s friends, or I should have known before now.’

As he spoke, he unlocked the door, and looked out, and in a few minutes Hughie Dagg appeared, with ‘news’ written on every feature of his face.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### A BUDGET FROM NEWCASTLE.

'NOTHING wrong at Netherdyke, I hope,' said Mr. Belliston, on seeing Hughie.

'Naething, sir. There's been never a soul there sin' ye left. But Dick Wetherby's just landed back wi' letters, and I've brought them wi' me, and, ma sang! there's gran' news. He says the folk at Newcassel are clean wud wi' fright, for Prince Charlie's landed i' the Hielands wi' twenty thoosan' Frenchmen at his back, and he has ten thoosan' Hielanders forbye, and a' marchin' for the South. Dod, but it's fine news if it's a' true.'

We looked at one another. Bowrie commenced pacing to and fro in evident excitement. The Squire of Netherdyke hurriedly tore open a newspaper which had come with the letters.

'There, Gil,' said he; 'your eyes are younger than mine. See what is said.'

I ran my eye eagerly over the news sheet. It was



the *Newcastle Courant*, and at last I found the part I was in search of, and read it aloud.

All that I can remember now is that it announced that news had come from Scotland that the Prince of Wales (they called him the Pretender's son, or the Young Pretender, I forget which) had landed at Moidart with three hundred men, and had been seen about a fortnight ago at Lochaber.

My listeners looked a little sobered on hearing this, for there was no mention of the great following of French and Highlanders; but, then, the real state of affairs might have been concealed for party purposes.

'And now, Hughie,' said our host, 'we'll clear out and leave our friends to read their letters, while I see that you have something to eat and drink.'

'Not so,' cried Mr. Belliston. 'Don't go. We've no secrets from you, old friend.'

So Hughie having gone off to refresh the inner man, I set both the candles on an up-ended cask, and proceeded to read the letters, of which there were three. The first was from Simon, and read as follows :

'DEAR BROTHER,

'I was right, you see. It was a trap intended to take you. As I expected, the messengers were

not acquainted with your person, and their mistake was never discovered until we got to Newcastle. It was James Farnaby who found it out. He said he had heard of your arrest, and came to see if he could do anything for you. Judge, then, of his astonishment when he saw me. I was at once liberated, and am now, at this time of writing, at his house, and quite comfortable, so do not disturb yourself about me, but look to your own safety. I send a newspaper, in which you will find something to interest you. I shall, I think, stay here for a few days, and observe what goes on. I am sorry to inform you that George is not yet gone. I have severely censured Thurston for disobeying your orders. For some reason of his own, I fancy he has encouraged George to hang back. I hope you may be able to send me some money. I came away without any, and have been obliged to borrow from Farnaby.

‘Your affectionate brother,

‘SIMON BELLISTON.’

The Squire of Netherdyke was deeply annoyed at several things in this letter: first, that Simon should accept favours from his brother-in-law after the strong suspicion—nay, more than suspicion—as to his treachery; next, at the insinuation against Mr.

Thurston, and, most of all, that George was still in Newcastle.

The next letter was from Mr. Thurston, and I opened it with some curiosity as to what his explanation might be.

‘MY DEAR FRIEND,’ it commenced,

‘I know you will be both astonished and displeased on hearing that we are no further advanced on our way than the above direction shows, but when you hear the reason I hope you will attach blame neither to George nor myself. After Gilbert Falconar’s sudden departure (who, I hear, is now with you), I tried to persuade George to proceed without him, but he entreated me to wait for awhile, so that we might all travel together, as at first intended. Then came rumours of a certain event in the North, and now nothing would serve George but that we must return forthwith to Netherdyke. Such, he urged, would surely be your wish when you heard the news, and he is the more confirmed in this opinion since your brother’s coming here, and the account he gives of your attempted seizure. I thank Heaven for your providential escape. All that we could say or do, we scarce could prevail upon George to stay here. Now he has yielded so far as to consent to wait

until he hears your pleasure by your own hand, so pray send him word at once, and relieve me from the embarrassment in which I find myself.

‘Your faithful and obliged

‘A. THURSTON.’

‘Bravo George!’ cried Bowrie, as I finished reading this letter; ‘he’s acted like a lad of spirit, only I would have liked him all the better had he come right off in spite of all.’

‘No, no, Will,’ said Mr. Belliston anxiously; ‘he must go on to Oxford. I will write at once and tell him so. But now for the other letter, Gilbert.’

The third letter was short, and ran :

‘DEAR SIR,

‘I have got two thousand, and will send within the week, if you do not send for it yourself. I would have sent a *Courant* with latest news, but your man tells me he has one.

‘Your humble servant to command,

‘PETER PACEGATE.’

Bowrie looked inquiringly at the Squire of Netherdyke.

‘And what the deuce may that mean?’ he asked.  
‘And who’s Peter Pacegate, if it’s a fair question?’

‘Peter Pacegate is Ralph Hodgson, and as we are like to need money for the business in hand, I instructed him to raise all he could on my securities. It appears he has got two thousand guineas—not much, but it will help. As Simon happens to be in Newcastle, he may as well bring it.’

‘Humph!’ growled Bowrie. ‘Better let Hodgson send it by one of his own people. Simon might happen to get taken again, or——’

‘But there’s nothing against him, and why should they take him? I’ll send him authority to receive on my behalf.’

‘Well, if you won’t take a fool’s advice, you must take your own way, I suppose,’ grumbled Bowrie. ‘Come now, Gil, and let us have a peep at this wonderful new horse of yours.’

I had been telling him before about Cheviot, and, I fear, bragging not a little. I brought out the horse, and, after he had been duly inspected and admired, I mounted and put him through his paces, and very proud I was to show him off before such a judge as the Squire of the Bower.

## CHAPTER XV.

### HOW WE SENT A MESSAGE TO THE PRINCE.

GREAT was the excitement all over the country caused by the news of the Prince's landing. More particularly was this the case in the Northern counties, for they, of course, would be the first to be entered in case of a descent upon England. Both sides were active. The supporters of the Government had this against them, that the bulk of the English army was in Flanders, but, on the other hand, they had all the machinery of the law and established power at their back, and could act openly and without concealment in their preparations. We of the Prince's party had to conduct all our operations in secrecy. We could hold no large meeting ; dared not let it be known that we met, even in twos and threes, lest measures should be taken for our arrest. Happily, the race-meeting at Hexham was now only some three weeks distant, and there we hoped to meet our friends and discuss our plans. For

many days Hughie Dagg, myself, and many others were scarcely out of the saddle, so many people had we to see, and so many messages to carry to and fro.

So far there was no word of George, which led us to suppose he had gone on his way South with Mr. Thurston, as ordered by his father in his last letter ; but a strange thing and a disquieting thing was that there was no news from Simon, who ought to have arrived long since with the money from Mr. Hodgson. This money the Squire intended sending on to the Prince, in the hope that his example in so doing would be followed by other English Jacobites, and its non-arrival caused him much uneasiness. At length a letter from Mr. Thurston put a period, but not very agreeably, to our suspense.

From this letter it appeared that George and his uncle Simon being in company with some of the townspeople, the former had expressed himself rather too openly and freely in favour of the Prince, whereupon an information had been sworn, and both uncle and nephew had been arrested and clapped in prison. Through the good offices of Mr. Farnaby, their liberty had been offered them, on condition they gave their parole neither to leave the town nor communicate with their friends in the country. Simon, who had accepted these conditions, was released ;

but George, who refused point-blank, was still in custody. The man who brought the letter brought also a verbal message of an alarming nature, no less than that Sir William Middleton, of Belsay, contemplated the arrest of several well-known Jacobites, amongst others the Squires of Netherdyke and the Bower.

As Sir William would most probably come with a strong force at his back, it behoved us to remove to some safer spot than the Bower, and we resolved to go to Farneycleugh, the hill farm of the Dagg family. Bowrie, however, stoutly refused to budge from home, saying he would not run away for any Whig of them all. Nevertheless, he approved of our going, seeing that we held the threads of the conspiracy, as far as our part of the country was concerned, and seeing also that the Squire of Netherdyke was amongst the few of our party who had received any regular military training or seen active service, so that his arrest would go far to wreck our whole enterprise.

The 'town' of Farneycleugh lay far up the Tyne valley, in the hill country bordering on Scotland, and afforded facilities for communicating with the North by ways where no Government troops were likely to be met with; besides, from its out-of-the-way situation, it was a safe place of refuge. We were, of



course, received with every demonstration of welcome by the Daggs, Hughie's father and uncle, and the whole of their family. I should like well to give a description of the place and people, and of the kind treatment we received there, only that it would unduly impede the course of the story I have to tell. Suffice it to say, we were treated to the best the place afforded, and that the worthy people were fain to eat us for kindness, as the country saying is.

At Farneycleugh I renewed my acquaintance with big Jock Corbitt, who so many years ago had brought me to Netherdyke. He had been settled down for some years in a cottage on the farm of Farneycleugh. One day the Squire, attended by Hughie Dagg and myself, was out riding on the hills, when suddenly Hughie uttered an exclamation.

'Here's yen comin', Squire,' cried he, 'yen that'll be gey pleased to see ye.'

Far away on a hillside we could make out the figures of a man and a dog coming in our direction.

'Who is it?' asked the Squire.

'Wha but Jock Corbitt,' was the reply.

The Squire's face lit up with pleasure, and now we could see Jock's gigantic form rapidly nearing us, with huge, high-stepping strides, as is the way of those used to travel amongst heather. The greeting of the two old comrades-in-arms was warm.

‘Glad to see you, Jock,’ said the Squire. ‘Glad to see all old friends, especially such stanch ones as you. We’re likely to need all our friends now. What say you, should I have to go out once more and strike another blow for the King?’

Corbitt stopped short, his huge form dilating, his eyes sparkling, and his face lit up with a fierce joy.

‘I’se wi’ ye, Squire!’ he cried enthusiastically; ‘and the seuner the better say I.’

Some little time after this came hopeful news from Scotland. The Prince, now at the head of a considerable force of Highlanders, had out-manœuvred Sir John Cope, the English General, and got between him and Edinburgh, which town he hoped soon to enter. This news so disconcerted our Whig opponents, and gave them so much to do and think about, that the project of arresting those of our party was given up for the time being, and we were able to return to Netherdyke. Then we heard that the Hexham race-meeting was to be abandoned, owing to the unsettled state of affairs. This, of course, disturbed our arrangements, but at a small meeting we had at Bellingham it was resolved to send a letter to the Prince, asking him, in the event of his entering England, to send part of his force by way of North Tynedale, so that we might join it, while he marched on Newcastle. It was pointed out to him

that this course would encourage his sympathizers in the West country to declare for him and come out, seeing it would free them from the danger of being overpowered in detail. Jock Corbitt was entrusted with the important task of carrying this letter, and set off in the guise of a packman to do so.

For my part, I was to go to Newcastle with certain messages to Peter Pacegate and others. I was also to bring the money which Simon had been prevented by his parole from fetching, and which, for some unaccountable reason, Peter Pacegate had not as yet sent by another hand.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### IN WHICH I VISIT PETER PACEGATE AND ALSO NEWGATE.

As I neared Newcastle I found the roads alive with people making for that town, some on foot, some on horseback, and some with carts laden with goods and chattels of all kinds. There was panic in the air, and the most conflicting rumours were floating about concerning the Prince and his army. By some it was even said they were only fifteen miles away, at Morpeth. The country people, who were mowing and binding in the cornfields, left their work in crowds and set off for the town, so that many a farmer lost his harvest for want of hands to get it in.

Inside the town the excitement was quite as great. The mayor had ordered the walling-up of some of the town gates, and had called a meeting of townsmen to consider means for the defence of the place. In the midst of a great confusion, people

carrying ladders, spades, and pickaxes to the town-yard, carts laden with furniture pouring in, and gaping and terrified crowds, I reached the White Hart. Thence I sallied forth on foot to call upon Mr. Hodgson, otherwise Peter Pacegate.

Mr. Ralph Hodgson lived in an old-fashioned house, with overhanging stories of timber and brick, situated upon the quayside. He was by calling a hoastman, that is, a sort of town agent for a colliery, who arranged for the sale and shipment of coal. I was fortunate enough to find him in his business office, on the ground-floor of his house, and as soon as we were alone, I handed him a letter I had brought from Netherdyke. He ushered me into a private room at the back, and carefully closed the door. Then he read the letter, after which he tore it across and held the pieces in the flame of a taper, which was burning on the table, until they were reduced to ashes. I stood watching him the while, a strongly-built man of about fifty, with a good-natured, honest, comfortable cast of countenance, the face of one who could be trusted, I thought. Not until he had thrown the ashes of the letter into the fireplace did he speak a word.

‘There, now, Mr. Falconar,’ said he, treading the burnt paper to powder with his toe, ‘that’s safe, and I hope my friend the Squire treats all my corre-

spondence in the same manner. And now tell me your news, and all that is happening Netherdyke way.'

'First tell me,' said I, 'what is the truth about the Prince. Is he so nearly here as they say in the town?'

'I am sorry to say he is not. He is no nearer than Edinburgh, and General Cope is moving his army by sea to intercept his march southward.'

Then I entered upon an account of recent events in our part of the country, and also told him the main cause of my present visit to him.

'As for the money,' said he, 'Mr. Simon Belliston got it from me, and I have his receipt. I suppose he has not been able to procure a safe messenger to send it by, but why he has not told me so is past my comprehension. I could have had it sent easily enough. Have you seen him since your arrival?'

'I have seen no one except yourself.'

'That was prudent,' said he, wiping his glasses and adjusting his wig. 'And when do you return?'

'That all depends. I must see my cousin George if possible, and then I must get the money; and, besides, I must collect all the news I can, though it is to your good self I chiefly look for the latter.'

'And you shall have a full budget,' said he. 'I am told Simon is at his sister Farnaby's. It might

not be wise for you to go there just now. Farnaby might take it into his head that you, like your cousin, might be safer, in the present state of affairs, shut up in Newgate. And when I come to think about it, I am not sure altogether about Mr. Simon either, so perhaps you had better not see him. How are you mounted ?

‘None better,’ I answered with a flush of pride ; for I was riding Cheviot.

‘That’s awkward, and increases the difficulty,’ was the rather chilling rejoinder. ‘It will not be so easy to take a good horse out of the town just now as to get him in. But I think I can manage for you. I will send a man to your inn with you, who will take the animal to a safe place outside, where you will find him afterwards.’

I had been told by the Squire to put myself entirely in Mr. Hodgson’s hands, and to follow his advice in all things, so I delivered Cheviot into the charge of his man, and then returned to his house.

‘I have good news for you,’ said he as I entered. ‘I have just heard that Farnaby and Simon Belliston are in attendance at the town hall at a town’s meeting called by the mayor. So now is your chance to see your cousin. His aunt goes to visit him every day, so if you call on her, doubtless she will allow you to go with her.’

As may well be supposed, I did not need twice telling, and in a very few minutes I was at Mrs. Farnaby's house.

'I hope you bring no bad news, Gilbert,' said that lady, as soon as she saw me. 'My mind has been continually on the rack concerning my brother of late. Would he were out of harm's way, like George.'

'But, madam,' said I, aghast, 'surely you do not mean what you say!'

'But I do indeed. Ten thousand times rather would I see him safely locked up than free to engage in the mad enterprise we know he contemplates. Surely his past experience might have taught him the folly of such an attempt, and that there is not the shadow of a chance of success.'

'But,' I said, 'there I must beg to disagree with you, Mrs. Farnaby.'

She smiled, and looked at me pityingly.

'Little you know about it, my dear Gilbert,' said she: 'the feeling of the country, the strength of the Government, and the forces at its command. You must have some talk with my husband about these things, and he will, I am sure, convince you how utterly hopeless it is to contend against them. And do you go to John—you have influence with him—and persuade him to give up this mad under-



taking, which can only end in his ruin. You will do this for me ?'

She said this with tears in her eyes, pleading very earnestly ; but I gave her to understand how useless such advice would be, pledged as her brother was. I told her, too, that I did not wish her husband to know of my being in the town, and why.

'That is the very reason I ought to tell him,' said she. 'With *you* beside George there would be at least two brands snatched from the burning.'

'Very well, madam,' I said with some warmth. 'I have come here trusting in your good faith, and you propose to put me in prison.'

'Silly boy! It is for your good. Better be in prison for a few days than be shot down or fall into the hands of the hangman, for that is what it will come to.'

'Come what may,' said I, 'I know my duty, and that is to stick by the side of my dear old kinsman, your brother, in the time of his trouble and danger. Nothing but force shall prevent me, and that I shall resist to the utmost of my power.'

'A fire-eater indeed !' she cried. 'I see we must think twice before attempting to secure such a doughty champion.'

She spoke with an air of mock dismay, but I could see she was both pleased and moved for all that.

She was a Belliston, and her brother's sister, after all. When I asked her to allow me to go with her next time she visited George, she refused point-blank. No; he was getting reconciled to his position, and my going would only unsettle him again. I was still pressing the matter, when my cousin Kate came in, and at once espoused my cause. It would be cruel and heartless in the extreme, she said, to deprive poor George of the pleasure of seeing me; and she pleaded so prettily and so earnestly that in the end she prevailed, and we all set out for the prison of Newgate together. On the way Kate talked a good deal with me, and I noted that all her talk was of George, and of the cruelty of keeping him thus cooped up; of how he employed himself; what he read, and of how she went to visit him almost every day, sometimes with her mother, sometimes with Mr. Thurston—who, she said, was the kindest of men—and sometimes with her uncle Simon.

The room in which George was confined was in the upper part of Newgate, and greatly astonished I was when I entered it. I had pictured to myself a cold, bare cell, and instead, I saw a comfortable, prettily-furnished room, with flowers even and other adornments, all arranged with an air of dainty neatness which would have been surprising but for what

Kate had told me of her daily visits. Poor George, indeed ! with such a ministering angel ! I almost felt I would not have cared to change places with him until the remembrance of his father and the enterprise came into my mind.

I pass over our meeting, and need not say how glad he was to see me. Speedily I told him of his father's welfare, and when Kate had slyly persuaded her mother to step out with her and see the view from the top of the tower he seized the opportunity to tell me a great secret. He hoped to escape, and that on the very next day. Mr. Thurston was even then absent on a mission connected with the plan ; and there was someone else, whose name he was not at liberty to divulge, who was very active on his behalf. The difficulty was not in getting out of the prison. That could be managed with comparative ease. It lay in getting clear of the town, the walls and gates being all so strongly and constantly guarded and watched. Then it occurred to me that he might go with me, for Mr. Hodgson had led me to understand that he could convey me to where my horse was waiting outside. I told him of this, and we arranged that I should wait for him at Mr. Hodgson's on the following evening. His spirits rose immediately when this was settled, and to see and hear him you would have thought the thing was

done. He worked himself up into the wildest state of enthusiasm, picturing our joyous ride home, and all that we would do when we got there. But the return of his aunt put a period to his raptures, and we bid him farewell after a while, leaving him in excellent spirits.

I had escorted Mrs. Farnaby and Kate as far as their house, and was on my way to the White Hart, thankful that I had not fallen in with either Mr. Farnaby or Simon, when, on turning a corner, who should I run against but the latter individual himself. I was so taken aback that I stood speechless; and he, noticing my discomfiture, chuckled with glee.

'Master Gilbert Falconar, no less!' he cried; 'and seemingly not well pleased to meet with an old friend. And what, may I ask, brings your worship to Newcastle?'

'I came partly to see you,' I replied. 'I was to ask you why you have not sent on the money you had from Mr. Hodgson.'

'Dear me! What a curious coincidence!' and here he laughed again. 'Why, Mr. Hodgson sent for me and asked me the very same question but now. Most curious—is it not?'

'Not at all. I called and told him you had not sent the money.'

'More curious still. He never even mentioned your name, and I'm sure he knows I would be glad to see you.'

'But the money—what of it?' I asked, with some impatience.

He laughed again.

'Make your mind easy about that,' said he. 'It will be at Netherdyke before you.'

'Then you have sent it?'

'Have I not just said it will be there before you? And how long do you intend staying, you who are so fortunate as to be able to suit your movements to your convenience—unlike poor me?'

'I am uncertain,' I answered.

'Then I may see you again. I am still at Farnaby's. Probably you will be calling.'

'No,' said I; 'I have reasons for not wishing Mr. Farnaby to know I am here. You will understand?' He made no answer, only smiled. 'You mean to tell him, then?' I exclaimed at last.

Again he smiled, I, standing filled with pent-up annoyance at his deliberation and coolness, he, enjoying my suspense. I repeated my question.

'I think not,' he said at length, as though uncertain whether he would or not; still in his old way keeping me in suspense, and so we parted.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### BRAVE NEWS FOR NETHERDYKE.

WHEN I reached the quayside again I found Mr. Hodgson in an extremely bad temper. He drew me into his private room.

‘I have had him here,’ he burst out—‘Simon Belliston, I mean—and of all the men I ever came across, he is certainly the most exasperating and provoking. I’ve had many dealings with the family, and, for the matter of that, so had my father and his father before him. And we have been beholden to them for many a kindness, and perhaps they have been beholden to us as well. But let that pass. In all our dealings together until now there has been perfect plain sailing, and open and honest trust the one in the other. Until now, I say, when there comes to me this—this——’

‘He is certainly an extraordinary man,’ said I, as he paused, at a loss for words.

‘Extraordinary man!’ he cried, now furious with

passion ; 'extraordinary idiot, or perhaps worse. He cannot give a straightforward answer to a straightforward question. I could get nothing definite out of him. Said, when I asked him where his brother's money was, that I had *his* receipt for it, that it was quite safe, and so forth ; never would say point-blank whether he had sent it or not ; darkly hinted he had.'

'So he did to me when I met him in the street half an hour ago. He told me it would be at Netherdyke before *I* got there.'

'Did he ? Then I think the sooner you start the better. I'll send to the White Hart for your belongings.'

'But,' I objected, 'I have promised to stay until to-morrow evening. George Belliston expects to be able to go with me.'

'What ! Has he, then, been released ?'

'No ; but he expects to escape.'

'Nothing of the kind. *I'll* take care he does nothing of the kind.'

'You, Mr. Hodgson ! His father's friend !'

'Yes, I, because I *am* his father's friend, and know his father's wishes.

'I shall keep my promise, nevertheless, and stay the time appointed, whatever may come.'

'This is sheer madness. You must not delay. I

suspect a hidden meaning in what Simon said about the money being at Netherdyke before you.'

But, in spite of all he could say, I resolutely refused to break my promise to George, and arranged with Mr. Hodgson to return the following afternoon, he promising to get me out of the town in one of his boats, as the safest way. Then I took my leave of him.

That evening Mr. Thurston called to see me, and we had a long talk, in which we discussed the arrangements for George's escape. My old friend relieved my mind very much by telling me that Mr. Farnaby had gone off to Berwick with Sir William Middleton and others. Next day, in the afternoon, I went, as arranged, to Mr. Hodgson's. He received me with somewhat of a grave and anxious air.

'I hope,' said he, when we were closeted together, 'that your memory is good, for I have much to tell you which can only safely be conveyed by word of mouth.' He locked the door, then went on in a low and earnest voice: 'In the first place tell Mr. Belliston that he and his friends need have no fear of arrest at present. Those who would like to see them taken have too much on their hands to stir a step against them. They know not to a day when the Prince may be upon them. Tell him that our friends here have sent to his Royal Highness praying



him to march with all speed before the Government forces have time to concentrate here, as is intended ; that is, if he can elude or defeat General Cope ; all will depend upon that. Tell our friends that, if the Prince does either, they may count upon the support of a large minority here in the town, and we have certain promises of support elsewhere, both in the South and West. So now go home, and look out for more news soon. A few days will decide. All their dependence is on General Cope, but it may turn out they are leaning on a broken reed.'

I listened to all this with the keenest interest. Events were marching with a vengeance, and soon we might be in a position to take the field openly. A great elation came over me, a feeling of pride that I was acting, in however humble a capacity, for the furtherance of our great cause. I felt eager to be off with the news, and only my promise to George restrained me from departing there and then. Were he but here, how glorious would it be for both to go together with the message which was to give joy and hope to all our friends ! Mr. Hodgson kept fidgeting as time went on, urging the necessity of speed, and the possible danger of delay. But I refused to go until George arrived, or we had news of the failure of his attempt at escape.

'I have told you before that he will not escape !'

cried my host with emphasis. 'I tell you so again. In fact, I have taken steps to prevent it, and you may tell his father so from me. Therefore you had better prepare to go on board at once. You have wasted too much time already.'

Still hoping against hope, I stipulated for just one half-hour more.

'Very well, then,' said he, reaching down an old long-skirted brown coat. 'In the meantime you can be getting ready. Put on that coat over your own. It would never do for people to see a gallant in laced coat and hat setting sail in one of our keels. Awkward questions might be asked.'

I put on the coat, then he handed me a plain round hat, and a pair of shoes with brass buckles.

'Now,' said he, 'you are my clerk, and your name is Tom Bootiman, if anybody asks. Give me your sword. I will have it sent on board with your boots and other belongings. The skipper knows exactly where to land you, and you will find your horse ready to mount. Time is up. I hope you will not forget anything I have told you. And particularly impress upon them that, in case of Cope being defeated, they may——'

Here there was a hasty tapping at the door, and Mr. Thurston burst into the room, his long face pale with excitement.

'I scarce know whether to rejoice or lament,' he panted out, 'for I have cause for both. George cannot come. Our plan has failed. But I have news, and *such* news! An express has just come in from Berwick——'

'Yes?' cried Mr. Hodgson and I both together. 'And the Prince?'

'Has fought a battle this morning at Preston Pans, and totally defeated General Cope. A most complete victory. Cope himself brought the news to Berwick.'

'Then there can be no mistake about it!' cried Mr. Hodgson. 'This is brave news! So now away, and let them know at Netherdyke.'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HOW I BROUGHT THE BRAVE NEWS TO NETHERDYKE.

SOON I was on board the keel, one of those grimy black vessels peculiar to the Tyne, and used for the conveyance of coal. It was moored outside a tier of ships just opposite Mr. Hodgson's house, so I had not far to go. The skipper caused me to enter what he called the *huddock*, a little cabin at the stern of the boat, so small that when I was within my head and shoulders projected through the hatchway above the level of the deck. Beside me I found my valise and other belongings, which had been sent on board by Mr. Hodgson. No sooner was I settled down than the keelmen cast off, and *set* the keel into midstream by means of long poles. Then they took to their oars—huge long affairs they were, and pulled standing upright, not sitting as in an ordinary boat—and so we passed up-stream and through Tyne Bridge with its queer, old-fashioned timbered houses. Then the mast was

hoisted, and the great square sail set, and away we went, almost in the eye of the wind, which was nearly dead ahead, for a Tyne keel can sail as near the wind's eye as anything that floats. At a rattling rate we tacked, first towards one bank and then the other, and the towering buildings of the old town, the castle and the church of St. Nicholas, receded rapidly behind us.

On board was a boy, a sharp-looking little fellow, his hands and face, like those of the men, black with coal-dust. Soon he came creeping close up to me, and began to scan me closely.

'Well, my man,' said I, after he had looked some time without saying a word—'well, my man, and who are you?'

With a grin which showed his white teeth he made answer, speaking in the broad Newcastle dialect:

'Aa'se the peedee.\*'

'Yes, I know that. But what's your name?'

'Little Bonny Buttons.'

'Nonsense!'

'Yes, it is. They caal ma feyther, the skipper there, Bonny Buttons, and aa'se little Bonny Buttons, and ma Uncle Jack, the keelbully there, they caal him Jumpin' Jack.'

\* Name given to a boy who works on board a keel.



'Haad yor gob, ye impittent whelp!' cried the skipper, 'or aa'l Jumpin' Jack ye, taakin' to the gentleman like that. But he's reet, sir, iv a way. They *dee* caal us what he says, for shortness. But ma reet nyem's Bill Elley, William Elley when aa sign ma nyem at the bindin'\* wiv a criss-cross.'

Here he had to give his attention to bringing the keel round for another tack, and the urchin sidled up nearer to me and, craning his neck, asked in a confidential whisper.

'Will ye let's have a luk at yor sooard?'

'And how do *you* know I have a sword, Mr. Inquisitive?'

'Aa carried it aboard, lapped up in the cloak.'

I saw no harm in humouring him, and unwrapped my cloak. He stretched himself flat on his stomach and looked down the hatchway.

'Baa!' he cried, in a tone of the deepest admiration, as I half drew the blade from the sheath. 'She is a clinker, and nee mistake. Aa'se warrand ye'll be gannin' to fight for Prince Chairlie?'

'Haad away forrard, aside yor Uncle Jack, ye young jackanapes!' cried the skipper; and the boy scuttled away. 'Nivver ye mind him, sir,' said the

\* At the annual binding the keelmen bound themselves to serve their employers, the hoastmen, for twelve months.

skipper, becoming confidential in *his* turn. 'Aa'll take care he says nowt to neebody. Aa waddent like to see Mr. Hodgson, canny man, get into trouble; no, nor ye owther, nor onybody on *wor* side. Yes, huz keelmen winnet be the last when the time comes. Ye know what aa mean—Jackey, lower the sail.'

We had reached our destination, and the keel was brought up alongside a wooden jetty on the north side of the river. I hastened to divest myself of my outer shell and pull on my boots. Then, after leaving the men something to drink my health, I stepped ashore. Scarce had I done so than I saw a man coming running towards me in hot haste, leading a gray horse, my own horse, Cheviot, in fact.

'Mount, and away at once,' cried the man, as he took my valise and cloak from the peedee and strapped them to the saddle. 'Mr. Hodgson has just sent word that you may be followed.'

Next moment Cheviot and I were on our way westward. Whether I was followed I know not; but even had it been so it would have mattered little, mounted as I was.

It was morning when I reached Netherdyke, and instantly messengers were despatched far and near to tell our friends of the good news I had brought. We were a merry party at supper that night. The

stout old Squire of the Bower was there, also his kinsmen from Hesleyside and Lee Hall. Many more there were, and amongst them young Thomas Collingwood of Thrunton in Coquetdale. The whole company was in the highest spirits, and many a rousing toast was drunk to the success of the cause, and the health of the Prince and his royal father. But as the night wore on our old Squire's spirits began to droop. It was after his sister had said something to him in a low voice, and the Squire of the Bower, noticing that he sat grave and pensive in the midst of the mirth, commenced to rally him.

'Why, Jack!' cried he, 'what ails you that you pull such a long face, when we are all so merry and with such good cause? One would think you were sorry the young Chevalier had won the day, did we not know you better.'

'Nay, I was but thinking of the poor English lads who fell yesterday at Preston Pans. I am sad to think of the blood of our countrymen being shed in such a cause.'

'Then they should have stuck by the right cause, the good old cause,' cried Bowrie warmly. 'Egad, Jack, but you're sadly changed. You did not think much about such matters that day when we charged Wills's dragoons at the other Preston, or if you did I can answer for it it did not stay your hand. But



come, let us see what can be done to draw our party together. I have an idea. They stopped the race-meeting at Hexham, and so we did not come together there. Let us have one of our own, and notify the countryside. They can do nothing to stop us now.'

'Bravo!' cried Tom Collingwood, rapping on the table with his hand, as did all the rest. 'Bravo! And I'll enter my bay gelding and match him for a hundred guineas against anything on four legs.'

'I'll take you on that,' said Bowrie on the moment. 'There's a nag in the stable here that I'll wager can beat your bay. What say you, Gil?'

Here he winked his eye at me, and I knew he meant Cheviot.

'Well, sir,' I replied, 'I have not seen Tom's nag, but he'll have to be a flyer to beat Cheviot.'

'I'll stand by what I've said,' retorted Collingwood. 'But when shall we hold this meeting?'

'Next week, at Bellingham,' said Bowrie.

And so it came about. We held our meeting, and a splendid lot of entries we had, and Tom Collingwood lost his hundred guineas, and said it was worth the money to be beaten by such a horse as the winner. The Jacobites of the county assembled in great force, for now the tables were turned, and it was our side which rode about, free to come and go

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as they pleased, and it was the Whigs who skulked at home or flocked for safety to the towns.

At that memorable meeting plans were discussed and details settled of what should be done when the Prince entered England. And each one rode cheerfully home, to make his preparations for the great event, so eagerly looked forward to; and hearts beat high with hope and elation which for many a long year had brooded in inaction and despair.

## CHAPTER XIX.

'OH, CHARLIE, YE'VE BEEN LANG A-CUMMIN'.'\*

THERE were those amongst us, and I confess I was one of the number, who thought that in a few days at most the Prince would be on his way South at the heels of Cope's defeated dragoons, and that our force should be added to that of the conqueror. But day after day, week after week passed, and still the news was that he lingered at Edinburgh.

It will be remembered that Jock Corbitt had been despatched with a letter to the Prince, and now he returned with an answer that special messengers would shortly be sent with instructions for us and others. We waited and waited, and still these messengers came not, and every day the news from Newcastle became more disheartening. On every hand the friends of King George were preparing for the defence of the country. We heard of Dutch troops arriving at Berwick ; of musters of volunteers ;

\* Inscription on Bowrie's snuff-mull.

of the sailing of the English army from Flanders, and still we were obliged to remain inactive. Many of our friends lost heart, and some we had counted on openly fell off and declared for the opposite side.

During this weary time I was employed in visiting such as were thought to be wavering, and carrying to them reassuring messages from our leaders. To show the sort of persons to be dealt with, I give an account of one of these visits. It was to a certain elderly gentleman in Hexhamshire, whose influence was great amongst his neighbours.

This old gentleman, who was a bachelor, received me kindly, but would hear of no business until we had dined. That important event in his day being concluded, I introduced the subject I had come about as we sat over our wine. After some little introduction, I asked him if he intended giving us his support.

'I suspected it was something of the kind you had come about,' said he, with a laugh. 'And look you, Mr. Falconar, I'll give you a straightforward answer, and let you know my sentiments plainly. You can tell Netherdyke and friend Bowrie and the rest that it matters not a jot to me who sits on the throne, whether it be King George or King James or anybody else, so long as they don't meddle with

me. So why should I go out of my way to help any of them ?'

'My dear sir !' I commenced, but he cut me short with :

'Here I am. I have my house and my land. I enjoy my dinner and pay my way. I am perfectly happy and contented. What more do I want ?'

I was irritated by this exhibition of selfish indifference, and began, with some heat, to give my opinion of it, when again I was interrupted, but not this time by my host. There was a tap at the door ; it opened, and in walked one of the most extraordinary apparitions I had ever seen in my life.

It was a thin, undersized man, with a twisted and distorted figure, and his face, which was wrinkled and withered, bore the vacant look which bespoke him as what is called a *natural*. He wore a suit of clothes vastly too large for his shrunken frame, evidently the cast-off garments of some person of quality, for they were of costly material and richly laced. In his hand he carried a gold-laced cocked hat with a great bunch of rowan berries stuck in it, and he marched up to the table and gravely saluted the old gentleman.

'It's poor Nanty, Squire,' said he. 'Only poor Nanty, come for the sweet wine and the cake.'

‘Very well, Nanty,’ said the old gentleman kindly, ‘you shall have them. But first we must have a song, as usual.’

‘What must I sing?’ asked Nanty, greedily eyeing the good things on the table.

‘Sing that one about King Jamie.’

Nanty cast his eyes up to the ceiling, and began, in a voice of strange sweetness, coming from such an uncouth source :

‘King Jamie is a bonnie lad,  
King George I do not know.’

Here he stopped abruptly, and, fixing his wild eyes upon me, he said rapidly :

‘But do you know what they fell out about, and went to battle for? No! Then I will tell you. They fell out about which of them was to cut off my father’s head. It was King George who won, and so he cut it off, and stuck it up over the gate at Carlisle. First of all, though, he hung him. King George said to him, “You must be hung by the neck, but not till you are dead. You must be cut down before you are dead, and your bowels must be taken out and burnt before your eyes. And then your head and your arms and your legs must be cut off and stuck up on the castle top. And the Lord have mercy on your soul!” I wonder he could not have

had mercy on his body when he was so particular about his soul. Don't you think it would have been kinder, Squire ?'

'Yes, Nanty, I quite agree with you,' said his patron. 'But you are forgetting your song, and if you do that, I may forget the wine and cake.'

'It's to be sweet wine, mind, Squire, not sour.'

'Sweet, if you sing nicely,' was the reply.

Nanty again cast up his eyes, and again began :

'King Jamie is a bonnie lad,  
King George I do not know;  
But the good Lord Derwentwater  
Was the best amang them o'.'

'Yes,' he broke out again. 'And he's another one that lost his head. But that was at London, a long way off.'

He spoke as if he thought the distance modified the disaster, and now, seeing he was getting excited, the old gentleman poured him out a glass of port wine. When he had taken this down, with many signs of satisfaction, said his patron, as he handed him some little cakes and a piece of loaf-sugar :

'Now, Nanty, you are a wise man. Tell us what you think one should do if the two kings fall out again. Tell us what *you* would do yourself. Which side would you fight for ?'

‘Ah, but I cannot tell that yet,’ said the simpleton, with a cunning smile and a shake of his head. ‘I would wait till the hanging begins, and the cutting off of heads, and then I would be on the same side as the hangman.’

‘Bravo!’ cried the delighted old gentleman. ‘I said you were a wise man, Nanty, and so you are—wiser a good deal than many an one who thinks himself no fool. I’ll tell you what, Mr. Falconar, I think you might do worse than advise certain people we wot of to follow poor Nanty’s plan. Here, my man, there’s another glass of wine for you, the reward of wisdom. And now, get you gone, and keep out of mischief.’

Nanty thereupon departed, munching his cakes, and proud as a peacock at being so highly praised.

‘His father,’ said my host, in answer to my inquiry, ‘was a tenant of mine, and was out in the Fifteen. He was taken and executed at Carlisle some few months before the poor lad was born. He is quite harmless, and gets the run of the house and his bite and sup, poor fellow.’

It may be imagined that the effect of such an interview as this was anything but encouraging, and I had many more of like result in the end, though different in detail.

With such expeditions precious time went on,



and still the Prince lay inactive at Edinburgh, while his enemies gathered strength every day at their headquarters at Newcastle.

To that town Hughie Dagg was sent to ask Simon for the money, which had not yet arrived, but he got no further satisfaction than I did. With him he brought a letter from Mr. Hodgson, saying that Simon had put down his name on the list of those pledging themselves to defend the town. On being challenged with this by those of the Prince's party, he said he had only done it, like many others, as a blind to the Whigs. Our correspondent added that the defences of the town were now completed, great guns being mounted on the walls, and that fully twenty thousand troops, English and Dutch, under the command of Marshal Wade, were encamped on the town moor. He added that George was still in Newgate.

And still there came no messenger from Scotland, and our hearts got heavier day by day. At length, however, the chiefs of our party determined to send again to the Prince, and, to my great joy, I was pitched upon to be the messenger, and Jock Corbitt and Hughie Dagg were to accompany me. It was a great relief to be at last doing something, and my satisfaction was increased by a gift made me by the Squire—a gift I would have preferred to any other

in the world, no less than Cheviot, the gallant gray  
I had now learned to love so well.

On November 6 we left Netherdyke on our event-  
ful journey. That night we slept at Farneycleugh,  
and on the following morning set off to cross the  
Border.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE HIGHLAND WAR PIPES.

THERE had been a keen frost during the night, and the ground was in some places hard and slippery as glass, so that several times we were obliged to dismount and lead our horses. This made our rate of progress very slow, and fretted me, impatient as I was to get forward. Hughie Dagg, however, was in great spirits. He was full of his Newcastle journey, and of the wonders he had seen—the great camp on the moor, with its tents and cannon, the crowds of generals and officers, and the drilling of the troops—horse, foot, and artillery. He treated us to his views on military matters, as one being now an authority on the subject, and I noticed that Jock Corbitt, though he said little, occasionally smiled grimly as he listened to our young friend's boldly expressed opinions. Doubtless the veteran was thinking of the times when he had seen and met King George's troops, not on the parade-ground,

but face to face in deadly earnest. Suddenly, happening to look back, he uttered an exclamation, and pulled up.

Coming rapidly towards us we saw a solitary horseman, who was waving his hat as if to attract our attention. We all stopped.

'I canna mak' out the rider,' said Hughie, shading his eyes with his hand; 'but he's fra Farneycleugh, whaever he is, for the horse is wor Tinkler. Now I see him better. It can never be! Dod! I'll be hanged if it isna the young Squire!'

And sure enough it turned out to be George Belliston, riding as if a broken neck was of little consequence, and soon he was with us, and we were all in transports of delight. Yes—in answer to our eager questions—he had given them the slip at Newcastle; had escaped, owing to the kind assistance of a friend whose name he was not at liberty to mention, the same mysterious friend he had mentioned to me before. On reaching Netherdyke he had heard of our errand, and had, with great difficulty, prevailed on his father to allow him to follow and accompany us. Arrived at Farneycleugh just after we had left, he had exchanged his tired horse for Tinkler, and here he was, and so let us get forward. I cannot tell how pleased I was to have the dear fellow with us, and to see his hand-

some, honest old face again, not behind prison doors, but in the free mountain air of the Border.

By the time we had passed the Deadwater Moss and crossed the Border line the weather had changed and become soft, with a cold raw east wind blowing. The going was still bad, but in a different way, for the ground was as soft as before it had been hard, and, but for Corbitt and Dagg's skilful guidance, we should most surely have been bogged more than once. Our two Borderers knew every inch of the ground, and led us on, twisting and winding through the hags and mosses, sometimes taking the beds of the burns as the only safe path.

I shall never forget the dark wildness of the landscape at that time—the November sky lowered heavy and sullen, and although the afternoon was very little advanced darkness appeared to be already closing in. The flat, desolate morasses behind us, over which the wheeling curlews hovered with their wailing cries; the brown and sombre hills, piling and swelling around us, the higher ones with their summits sometimes lost in the floating mists which crept about them like unquiet ghosts; the patches of snow which lay here and there, their cold whiteness intensifying by contrast the darkness of the surrounding ground; the death-like solitude which brooded over us, for not even a sheep was to be

seen—all these were calculated to depress the spirits and fill the mind with vague forebodings of evil.

For some time we rode on in silence, for all seemed to feel the influence of the scene. I was myself conscious of some inward trouble other than that caused by the melancholy surroundings, and soon it shaped itself into definite thought. Who could George's mysterious helper be? I kept asking myself. It could not be Mr. Thurston, for there had been no attempt made to disguise his wish to aid in the escape. Mr. and Mrs. Farnaby were out of the question. Simon remained; but if it had been Simon, what could have been his motive? He knew perfectly well his brother's wish was that George should not embark in the enterprise to which he was now committed. What, then, could his motive be? I began to have dim suspicions as to its nature—suspicions which other late actions of Simon's seemed to confirm. Then, again, there was another difficulty. Why had the Squire allowed his son to join us after all, seeing he had been all along so set against such action? It was past comprehension. It looked as if the thing had been fated to take place, so strongly and strangely had circumstances worked towards its fulfilment. Perhaps the Squire had also come to that conclusion, and bowed to destiny. Slowly I rode on, busied with these

thoughts, when suddenly they were diverted into another channel by an exclamation of wonder from my companions.

We were on the top of a low hill, from whence we could see the country for miles around. On our left we looked down into Liddesdale, and on our right into the valley of a burn, which flowed into the Liddell River. What had caused the wondering exclamation of Dagg and Corbitt was that the hillsides of Liddell, usually alive with sheep and cattle, were bare and void. Not a single head of cattle, not a sheep, was to be seen. Not far away was a farmstead, with its stables and byres, and its peat stacks in the yard. Down to this we rode, but the house was empty and locked up; stable and byre were empty too. The only living thing about the place was a cat, which we could see through the window, comfortably coiled up on the hearth before the still smouldering peat fire.

'There's somethin' amiss,' said Jock Corbitt.

'Aye,' cried Hughie Dagg, 'and somethin' forbye the ordinar. It's the first time ever I cam' to Thorlieshope and didna find kind welcome and good cheer.'

We were still wondering what might be the matter, when we saw a man in the distance, and Hughie galloped off to him for information, and

soon returned faster even than he had gone, and in great excitement.

'It's Charlie Scott, o' Kirnton, him they ca' "Fightin' Charlie,"' he cried. 'Ye'll ken him fine, Jock. And what think ye he says? The Hielanders are on the way. They left Jedburgh this mornin', and by this time they'll no' be far off. It's expected they'll camp hereabout, like as not at the Saughtree. That's how the folk are gane off wi' their sheep and kie.'

Here, then, was news indeed—great and glorious news for us. The Prince, then, had acceded to our request, and this was the detachment of his army which was to march through mid-Northumberland, while he, with the main army, advanced upon Newcastle. The direction of the march and the supposed halting-place pointed clearly to this.

We were returning to the hilltop on which we had stood before, there to await the approach of the Highlanders, when, on a rising brae, we saw a tow-headed little lad coming running straight towards us, evidently in great terror. He gave a yell of alarm as he saw us, and darted on one side, but Hughie Dagg intercepted him, and seized him by the arm.

'Oh, let's awa', cried the child; 'let's awa' hame! The Hielanders is comin'!'

'Never fear,' said I, trying to speak as kindly and quietly as in my excitement I could. 'We'll not



let them touch you ; but how do you know they are coming ?'

' I see'd them come doon the glen, when Rabbie was makin' for the grain wi' the sheep. And they've taen puir Rabbie and a' the sheep, and they'll be here the noo. And they say they eat bairns and callants, and I want to be hame to ma mither.'

Being now released, he darted off with the speed of the wind, and I turned, to find Jock Corbitt sitting stock still in his saddle, his gaze turned eastward up the valley of the burn, his head bent eagerly forward in the act of listening intently. Presently there came to our ears a faint sound, a strange wailing, melancholy sound. Then it died away, then came again, but louder, and with a more spirited strain than before, as the breeze bore it towards us.

Corbitt's face lit up, his eyes sparkled, and his huge figure dilated, as on that day at Farneyleugh when the Squire announced to him the probability of a new campaign. He raised his great right hand on high, and brought it down with a resounding slap on his thigh.

' I kenn'd it,' he cried, ' I kenn'd it fra the first. The news is true. The Prince's lads are on the march at last, and the soun' ye hear 's the soun' o' the Hielan' war pipes.'

## CHAPTER XXI.

### A GREAT SURPRISE.

My first impulse was to ride forward to meet our Highland friends, but Corbitt strongly advised against this course. He knew their ways, and said by riding forward we might risk the receiving a leaden welcome from their skirmishers. Better to wait out of sight until they had passed, then quietly follow and join the rear-guard. Acting upon this advice, we dismounted and sent Hughie Dagg with the horses into a hollow where they could not be seen, while we concealed ourselves behind some piles of stone—cairns raised in memory of the dead slain in some great battle of long ago. Louder and louder came the warlike clamour of the pipes, and my heart beat high at the thought that ours should be the task to guide the long-expected succour to our friends in Tynedale.

The sky lightened as the weather gleam shone out, and presently we saw a score of dark figures appear

in the valley to our right. They came swiftly on, spread out in skirmishing order. Then appeared a troop of horsemen, and after them a body of Highlanders, with colours flying and pipes playing at their head. They marched with marvellous speed, considering the broken nature of the ground, and were followed at a short interval by a second body, also headed by its pipers in full blast.

By this time we had resolved to wait until they had halted to form their camp at the hamlet of Saughtree, which lay in sight below us ; but, to our surprise, the head of the column, when it arrived there, never paused, but swept straight onward down the valley of the Liddell. Clearly their leaders had made some mistake, for Saughtree was where they should have halted, to pursue their march down Tynedale.

Following the second body of clansmen came a tumultuous rabble of camp followers and pack-horses, and, at some distance behind, a troop of horse brought up the rear. Seeing it was now useless to wait for a halt, we resolved to follow Jock Corbitt's original plan. So, remounting, we made a detour to the right, so that we might follow, and quietly join the rear-guard. But, as it turned out, we had reckoned without our host.

It was now nearly dark, and, on turning to wheel

into the track, before we were aware of it we had ridden plump into the middle of a flock of sheep, scattering them in all directions. Then, before we had recovered from our confusion, we were set upon by a score or more of fierce-looking Highlanders, some seizing our bridles and some threatening us with sword and pistol. From the manner of our arrival, they were certainly justified in taking our movement for a hostile one, and for a few seconds a catastrophe seemed imminent, but in the nick of time one of their officers came up, and I called out to him that we were friends to the Prince, whereupon he said something in Gaelic which caused his men to fall back. Then he stalked up to us, and, with some haughtiness, asked in very good English who we were and what was our errand.

I replied that we bore messages for his Royal Highness from his friends in England, and would like to see the officer in chief command of the present force. He desired us to accompany him, and at an order from him his men resumed their march. I noticed that the men were so placed as to prevent any escape had we attempted it. Presently we overtook the flock of sheep into which we had so unwittingly intruded. It was being driven by a Border shepherd, the same Rabbie, so I afterwards learned, whose capture had been bewailed by

the boy we had encountered on the hill. He walked sulkily on, a Highlander on either side of him, his two dogs helping to herd the flock.

And now a significant episode occurred. The troopers of the rear-guard had been halted by the side of the muddy, sodden track by which the army had marched, and were waiting for our party to come up and pass forward. Their leader, in a richly-laced uniform, was chafing at the delay, and called upon the shepherd, with many fierce oaths, to mend the pace of the flock. But Rabbie was no gentle shepherd, at least when so provoked, and, his Border blood rising, he answered back with scant courtesy, and even went the length of threatening the officer with his crook. Trouble there would certainly have been, had not the young Highland leader placed himself between the two.

'Come, come, my good man,' he cried to the shepherd. 'A bargain's a bargain. Carry out your part and drive on the sheep, and I will keep mine, and see you are paid for them. You can leave this gentleman to me.'

'To you!' sneered the mounted officer, as the shepherd passed on.

'Aye, my lord, to me!' cried the Highlander fiercely, his eyes glaring and his nostrils dilating, as he gazed up defiantly into the other's face. 'Meddle

not with what is in my charge, and keep your anger and your curses for your own people.'

A collision between the clansmen and the horsemen seemed imminent. The former especially seemed ready to fly at the throats of the others at a word from their leader, and several claymores were drawn. But, with a gesture of disdain, their leader turned away, and bade them resume their march. The officer of horse contented himself by muttering another oath, then wheeled his party into the path behind us, and resumed his rear-guard duty. I must confess that this affair made a very uncomfortable impression upon me, for it certainly did not augur well for the state of discipline in the Prince's army.

We passed on over the miry road, our horses fetlock deep in wet snow and mud, through which the distressed and tired sheep had sore trouble to make their way. As for the Highlanders, nothing seemed to trouble them; they marched with steps as light and springing as though they were only beginning, instead of just about ending, a march of twenty-five miles, over rough and difficult ground. At length, much to our relief, we came up with the main body, which had halted on a level haugh by the side of the river; and here a great and pleasing surprise awaited us.

Our captor—for so I may term him—had, ever

since his altercation with his brother officer, preserved a gloomy silence, broken only by an occasional word of command. When the halting-place was reached, he addressed us for the first time.

‘And now, gentlemen,’ said he, ‘I must ask you to remain here for some little time, while I go to receive our chief’s orders for the night, and for your disposal. You say you carry letters for his Royal Highness?’

‘Yes,’ I replied; ‘but only for delivery into his own hand.’

‘Precisely. And perhaps you may have the honour of presenting them to-night, if——’

‘To-night!’ I cried in amazement. ‘But you must be mistaken. The Prince——’

‘Is here. Did you not know? He has marched with us all day, and is even now entering his headquarters.’

He pointed, as he spoke, across the river to a house amongst some trees. I was for a moment completely dumfounded. I had imagined all along that the Prince would be with the main army, well on his way to Newcastle. What could his unexpected presence here, with this small division, portend? Then a great joy came over me as I fancied I had guessed the truth. He would, then, lead in person the party we had asked him to send by way

of Tynedale, and when we marched out we should have him at our head. Probably he counted upon rousing the enthusiasm of the English Jacobites further South by thus appearing with a following not wholly Scottish, but partly composed of their own countrymen. The idea filled me with a great joy and an instant desire to see the Prince.

'I must see His Highness at once!' I cried impetuously to my Highland brother-in-arms, for so I now considered him.

'That is not for me to decide,' said he, with a grave smile. 'I go to the chief with your request, and there my duty ends. The rest is in his hands, and must be as he wills it.'

With these words he strode off, and left us in charge of his clansmen.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### ‘BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE.’

THE officer left in charge of us was a very young man, a brisk, active little fellow, well-dressed, well-armed, and disposed to be talkative. He told us he was a Macdonald and an ensign in Glengarry's regiment. His superior officer, who had just left us, was a captain in the same command.

Our ensign was very enthusiastic with regard to the present enterprise, and related with great glee the story of the battle of Preston Pans, and the doings of his clansmen and himself in that fight. Then he told us of the fine times they had enjoyed in Edinburgh, and, what was more to our liking, proceeded to describe their march thence. The army, he said, was divided into sections—where the rest of it had gone he knew not; indeed, whither this section to which he belonged was bound he knew not. It was sufficient for him that his chief knew. He seemed to know little about political matters either, or of the

rights and wrongs of matters for which he had risked his life and was prepared to risk it again. His opinions were the opinions of his chief, and the word of his chief was law to him.

Darkness had by this time closed in upon the valley, and we could see little but a confused mass of figures on the haugh. We were at some distance from the main press, crowding round the camp-fires, which were being kindled as fast as fuel could be obtained. Our friend the ensign told us the contingent present consisted almost entirely of MacDonalds and Camerons, who were the flower of the army, in the order named, he was careful to impress upon us. Besides these, there was a small body of life-guards under Lord Elcho—whom might the devil fly away with for his insolence to-night—and a squadron of horse grenadiers under Lord Pitsligo.

While we were talking the captain returned and requested us to follow him. We picked our way through the noisy crowds on the haugh, and gazed with interest upon the lively scene. Some of the younger men, despite their long march, were dancing reels to the pipes; others, more sober-minded, were mending their brogues or cleaning their arms. The camp-followers, male and female, were attending to the fires and cooking huge pieces of mutton, presumably the flesh of poor Rabbie's flock. Altogether

it was a strange scene, and not the least strange feature in it was the presence of so many boys, some of them mere urchins, and most of them clad in garments picked up or stripped from the bodies of the slain on the field of Preston. It was a grotesque and, had it not been so grimly suggestive, it would have been a laughable spectacle to see these miniature caricatures of Cope's dragoons strutting and capering in the firelight, clad in their misfitting scarlet uniforms.

We crossed the river, here very shallow, and passing along an avenue of trees, found ourselves in an open space before a house of medium size, the windows of which were all lit up. Sentinels were posted at the door, and a party of life-guards waited outside. A constant stream of officers kept passing in and out of the house, and it was with beating hearts that George Belliston and I followed Captain Macdonald through the portal of the building, within which we were to meet that gallant young Prince who had come to uphold his father's rights, trusting to the honour and loyalty of his father's subjects; the Prince who on the morrow was to be guided by us to where our friends awaited him.

The room on the ground-floor which we entered was pretty well filled with officers. At the further end was a door, and every now and again it opened

to allow someone to enter or come out. We had to wait some little time until our Captain's turn came to pass through the doorway; then he beckoned us to follow him, and entered, announcing us by name as soon as we were inside.

There were several persons in the room, some in the Highland garb, and others in various uniforms. They drew back and made way for us to pass to where stood a tall and handsome young man in the dress of a Highland Captain, all travel-stained and mud-bespattered, his rough deerskin brogues sodden with wet, and worn and frayed. Yet, despite his mean attire, there was a something in his aspect, something of majesty and consciousness of power, which marked him out from the rest. Noble and majestic forms there were there in plenty, proud Highland chiefs and noble lords, but there was no mistaking which amongst them was Charles Edward Stuart. With a kindly smile he made a step forward, his hand extended, and received our salutations.

'Welcome, Mr. Belliston,' said he to me, but instantly perceiving from my manner and my glance towards George that he had made a mistake, he added, before I could say a word of explanation, 'Mr. Falconar, I should say, for I see I have committed a not unnatural mistake. You must excuse

me that the name of Belliston came first to my lips, for it was in my heart that your friend's father fought for mine. So, Mr. Belliston, welcome again in your own proper person. And what message, gentlemen, bring you from our friends across the Bordér ?'

I handed him the Squire's letter, and noticed that while he read it his face grew grave and thoughtful, but he made no remark concerning it.

'And now let us hear something of affairs in England,' said he, when he had finished reading. 'Tell us what preparations you have made, and what are the chances in our favour. The letter is necessarily and prudently bald of detail. You may speak without reserve; all here are friends.'

He said this with a slight foreign accent, but with a most winning charm of manner; and I told him all I knew. When, in the course of my story, our old friend of the Bower was mentioned, the Prince was much interested, and asked many questions concerning him. He seemed to have the whole history of the campaign of Fifteen at his finger-ends, and knew the names of nearly all who had taken part in it. When I told him how the Squire of Netherdyke had intended sending a sum of money with us, but had been disappointed in receiving it in time, I noticed his secretary, Mr. Murray of Broughton, make a whispered remark to one who

stood next him, to the nature of which a sort of sneering smile gave a clue; and when I told the Prince how glad we would be to see him in England I noticed that smile on the secretary's face again. But the smile died away and his countenance fell when his Highness invited George and myself to sup with him that evening.

It was a noble and distinguished company with which we had the honour of sitting down in the crowded dining-room of that secluded house in the wilds of Liddesdale—Larriston House as it was called. And when the Prince took his place at the head of the table it was no longer as the travel-stained Captain of Highlanders that he appeared. He had changed the coarse plaid and philibeg for a short tartan coat, on the breast of which sparkled the Star of the Order of St. Andrew. A blue silk sash, embroidered with gold, crossed his breast, and he wore red velvet small-clothes and a silver-hilted claymore. His light-brown hair was neatly combed over the front of a light-coloured peruke, and fell behind in ringlets on to his shoulders. I had a better opportunity now of observing him in the blaze of the many candles than when I saw him before in the dimly-lighted room below. His face was ruddy with health and exposure, and slightly freckled, with a lofty brow, delicately moulded; the

nose high, the mouth small, the chin slightly pointed, the light eyebrows finely arched. He looked fully six feet high, but was in reality a little under; and certainly, if he looked handsome in the rough garb in which first I saw him, he looked doubly so now in his brave attire, his blue eyes sparkling with pleasure as he gazed round upon his assembled adherents.

First of all, looking most noticeable, were the Highland chiefs — young Lochiel, Keppoch, Glengarry the younger, Clanranald and Macdonald of Glencoe. Then there were the Lords Elcho and Pitsligo, Sir Thomas Sheridan, Colonel Sullivan, and Mr. Secretary Murray. Sir Thomas Sheridan, the head of the Prince's council, sat opposite to me, and on my left was Colonel Sullivan, a stout, rosy-faced gentleman, who was Adjutant and Quartermaster-General. Both these latter, being Irish officers in the French service, wore the uniform of their adopted country. On my right was M. de Boyer, Marquis d'Eguilles, a witty Frenchman, Envoy to the Prince from the Court of Versailles.

There was an air of gaiety and elation amongst our new friends, for the flush of their great victory at Preston Pans was still upon them. The Prince set the example, for he was beaming with happiness and good spirits. But it was Colonel Sullivan—a pleasant,

jovial fellow he proved to be—who most provoked our mirth with his droll sayings. In especial he seemed to love a passage-at-arms with the French Marquis, and never lost an opportunity of poking fun at him. He took a great advantage to himself by insisting upon the Frenchman speaking English, if only from politeness towards those at table who were not particularly good at French. In one of their skirmishes the Frenchman had decidedly the best of his Irish antagonist.

George Belliston was enjoying himself to the full, delighted with the novel experience, and gaily responding as first one and then another challenged him to a toast. At length the Marquis caught his eye, and, raising his glass, began to speak in French. I saw poor George's face turn red, for he did not follow the rapid utterance; but instantly the Colonel came to the rescue.

‘Pardon me, sor,’ said he to the Marquis. ‘Pardon me; but may I remoind ye again? What would ye think now if our frinds over there, Glingarry and Kippoch frinstins, were to begin and talk Gaelic to one another? How'd we all fale thin? I pray ye, sor, if ye plaze, spake English like meself.’

‘I beg your pardon, Colonel,’ said the Marquis, his eyes twinkling with mischievous humour. ‘I



forgot. But it is a difficulty one to *spake* Ingleses like yourself. Why, if I do, I make an Irish John Bull.'

There was a roar of laughter as George and the Marquis toasted one another; then the general conversation went on. Amidst it all I could not help noting that Mr. Secretary Murray sat mum and silent, never joining in the laughter, and only speaking when spoken to. His cold eye turned first on one and then another of the company, but most of all he regarded the Prince, as though jealously watchful lest he should particularly favour anyone. As it happened, His Highness was especially gracious towards George Belliston, and so my cousin received more than his share of the secretary's black looks. Another person who failed to contribute to the joviality of the table was Lord Elcho. He was not silent, like Murray, but his share of the conversation was cynical and bitter, more especially when he had to deal with either of the Irish officers. But the influence of these two wet blankets was scarce felt amid the general heartiness and good fellowship, and we were all carried away by the charm and polish of the Young Chevalier's manner. But to us—that is, to George and me—the climax came when he did us the honour of proposing a general toast to us, as the first to join him from across the Border.

It was a thrilling moment for us, as we sat and saw the whole of that gallant band—chiefs, nobles, and officers—rise to their feet on the invitation of their royal leader, and drink to our health and fortune with hearty goodwill. George returned thanks in a few modest words, and I stammered out my acknowledgments as well as my nervousness and confusion would allow me. Then ensued a scene of excitement which I shall never forget.

The Prince again rose to speak, and a hush came over the whole party.

'My lords and gentlemen,' said he, 'this evening marks an important point in our enterprise. So far, with the help of Providence, we have been successful beyond our hopes. It is with a full heart that I look back upon the loyalty and devotion of so many thousands of my father's Scottish subjects, which have caused them, regardless of the dangers and fatigues of war, and mindful only of their duty and their honour, to gather round the standard of their lawful King. I, as his Regent, thank you, their leaders, in his name. Almost alone I landed on these shores; since then you know what we have done—how we have carried all before us, and scattered the forces of the usurping Elector of Hanover. The success of the past gives good augury for the future. The loyalty of the North will, I

feel assured, be echoed in the South. The time is near which shall prove the reasonableness of my hopes. To-night we sleep on Scottish soil; to-morrow we enter England.'

There was a proud ring in his voice and a sparkle in his eye as he said these last words, and no sooner had he finished than there was a roar of applause, and the whole company started to their feet as one man, and huzzaed again and again until the rafters rang.

It seemed as though they would never have done, but the Prince's rising to his feet gave the signal to break up, and all withdrew. But as it turned out I was to have still one more strange experience on that eventful night. As I was leaving the room Morrison, the Prince's valet, called me on one side, and informed me his master wished to have some private talk with me in an hour's time.

My heart bounded with joy. Clearly his object was to question me as to the route for next day's march. I thought of our good old Squire and Bowrie and their joy when we should arrive. Happy indeed, then, had been our errand.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT.

WHEN I was ushered into his presence by Morrison, the Prince was seated by the fireside in a room adjoining his bedroom, clad in a dressing-gown, and smoking a pipe of tobacco. The only others present were Colonel Sullivan and Mr. Secretary Murray. As I entered, the Prince laid down his pipe, and, drawing his chair up to the table, motioned me to a seat by his side. On the table lay a map, and the Colonel, spreading it out before us, stood looking down over the Prince's shoulder. Murray took a chair on the opposite side, and, leaning his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands, sat listening to all that went on. There was an absence of all ceremony and formality, and we might have been taken for a party of people meeting on equal terms. The Colonel pointed to a place on the map. He was now no longer the merry boon-companion, but perfectly serious and business-like.

'Here, your Highness,' said he, 'is the route by which our Northumbrian friends would have us send a detachment—here, down the valley of the North Tyne. It is a wild country, no doubt, but no wilder than that we traversed to-day, and would present no difficulty to the clansmen.'

He paused, and in my exultation I burst out into assurances of the perfect ease with which the expedition could be marched. Even as I did so I noted a grim smile on Murray's face, which I thought boded no good. Nor was I mistaken.

'We will grant, then,' resumed the Colonel, 'that the route presents no difficulties. The point, however, is, that when this plan was suggested by our friends, it was intended that our main army should march by the east coast upon Newcastle. At that time there was no Hanoverian force, or none to speak of, in the town, and this plan of campaign was perfectly feasible. But now that Wade holds Newcastle in force, and that your Highness has decided upon entering England by way of Carlisle, I do not see how it would avail to send any part of our people into mid-Northumberland.'

I started back in amazement and consternation. The main army had not gone then, as I expected, towards Newcastle, but towards Carlisle instead, and in place of the Prince and his detachment

being bound for Tynedale, as I so fondly expected, here was one of his most trusted officers advising him against the course which formed our only hope. I began to urge the extreme necessity of sending a force for us to form upon. I strove to show how, once the stancher ones of our party had risen, the more timid would be encouraged to come out, too, and that, once Northumberland was in arms, the other counties would follow suit. I pleaded earnestly, almost with tears in my eyes, so great was this sudden disappointment. The Prince's face looked troubled as he gently interrupted me.

'We now come to the point, Mr. Falconar,' said he, 'on which I more particularly wished to question you. You have given me the names of certain persons who are ready and anxious to come out on our behalf. What is to prevent them joining us at Carlisle?'

'Nothing, sir,' I replied, 'only in that case there will be small hope of the waverers. They will remain at home, and our party, though devoted to the death, is a mere handful, and in itself could be of little service. It was the hope of encouraging the others which caused us to ask you to send us aid, and I hope and pray that you will yet reconsider your position. Upon your action now may depend whether the English Jacobites rise or not.'

‘We have here,’ said the Prince—‘we have here with us promises in writing from hundreds of English nobles and gentlemen. Reach me the despatch-box, Murray, if you please.’

The secretary produced and unlocked a large box, and the Prince took a sheaf of papers from it.

‘Look at these, Mr. Falconar,’ said he, holding them up. ‘They are all promises from English Jacobites to rise in arms should I land in Britain. So far, not a soul of them, as far as I know, has made a sign, with the exception of you and your friends, and even *you* ask for troops which can hardly be spared before you come out. Even *you* make conditions. True, they are not so onerous as some of *these*, who insist upon the landing of a considerable French force before they will move. Yet your conditions are well-nigh as awkward as theirs.’

‘Conditions, sir!’ I hastened to say. ‘We insist on no conditions. There you wrong us. We merely suggest the course which we consider best for the success of your cause. But as it appears not so to be considered by your advisers, we are ready to follow any other course you may think proper. Such were my instructions. Yet again I beg you to consider well before you reject our prayer. Without some accession to our strength we might

be overpowered by our opponents, and so prevented joining you at Carlisle, as you suggest.'

'Might I be allowed to advise, sor,' said Sullivan, 'that decision on this matter be deferred, seeing that you still appear somewhat jubious, until we effect a junction with the remainder of the forces? The question could then be discussed at a full council of war.'

I saw at once that his drift was to gain time, so that he might use it in urging his own plan, and made a final effort, but in vain. The Colonel had his will, and we were to wait for the general council to decide.

'As for these papers,' said the Prince, returning to the despatch-box, 'I have been advised to use them as levers to move those who sent them, by threatening to divulge their contents to the Hanoverian Government. But I want no pressed or half-willing men. If honour and duty are not sufficient to move our friends, I shall place no other pressure upon them. Besides, it would serve us little and be but a poor revenge to punish those who after all are our friends at heart, even though they evince their friendship only so far as paper goes. No; to-morrow we enter England, and not one of these witnesses shall enter with us.'

As he spoke, he took up a handful of the letters,



tore them across, and threw them on the fire. Murray, with a loud cry, started from his chair, and darting round the table, made as though he would have snatched the papers from the flames.

‘Your Highness!’ he cried, in extreme agitation. ‘You forget. I beg you to proceed no further. These letters may be of immense service to us yet.’

The Prince threw another batch into the fire.

‘Such service as they may be able to afford I reject,’ said he. ‘Assist me, gentlemen, to destroy them.’

Murray stood sullenly back while the Colonel and I obeyed with right good will, until the last scrap had crumbled into ashes. Happening to glance at the secretary, I noticed the scowl on his face change into a sort of half-contemptuous, half-triumphant smile as he received back the empty box, and somehow a suspicion struck me that all the compromising papers he had charge of had not been contained in it.

‘And, now that business is over,’ said the Prince, with a smile; ‘we’ll have a modest nightcap, and so to bed. Reach me my pipe, Colonel.’

I begged to be excused the honour proposed, for I felt too sore at heart at the failure of our mission to join in any further festivity. The soreness was not alleviated by the evident self-satisfaction of

Colonel Sullivan. He was now all mirth and jollity again, and was laughing heartily at one of his own jokes as I took my departure, along with Murray, who also had cause to feel cast down by the events of the night.

On the stairs we passed Morrison, coming up with the ingredients for a bowl of punch.

‘There is something I would like to ask you,’ said my companion, as we paused to say good-night. ‘Is your young friend any relative of a certain Simon Belliston, of Newcastle?’

‘His nephew,’ I answered, without thinking at the moment, what I thought afterwards, that the question was a strange one.

What could Mr. Murray know of Simon Belliston?

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE INVASION OF ENGLAND.

THE cold, gray dawn was just beginning to break when we were aroused by the braying of trumpets and the skirling of pipes, and, after a hasty breakfast, we mounted and made our way in the dim light to the haugh, where the clansmen were already mustering in their ranks. As the light began to strengthen, we got our first real view of the little army. It consisted of some two thousand men, and it was a gallant and a stirring scene which lay before us in that little Border valley, the long lines of kilted and plaided men, so strange in their habit to our eyes, the fluttering colours, the bustling about of officers, the forming up of the horse on either flank, and the confused rabble of camp followers preparing for departure. While we were looking on suddenly the pipes, which had been silent for some time, burst out into a wild pibroch, while at the same time a great shout rolled along the lines of

the clansmen. It was the Prince who now appeared, attended by his suite and a squadron of life-guards. He rode a handsome black charger, and again wore the rough dress of the day before, with a blue bonnet having a gold band and a white cockade. He looked in the best of spirits, and as he reached the front of the troops the sun suddenly burst out from amidst the gray clouds, and another shout rent the sky, acclaiming the happy omen. He rode along the front with beaming face, saluting each company with a few kindly words of morning greeting. Then seeing us, he cantered up, and desired us, for the present, to attach ourselves as volunteers to Lord Pitsligo's horse, a little troop made up of Scottish Lowland gentlemen and their servants. His lordship welcomed us with great affability, and no sooner had we joined than the signal for the march was given, and the troops got in motion.

The Prince dismounted and took his place on foot at the head of the column. The hills echoed again to the sound of the pipes, as we marched down the valley, and the country people came shyly out to watch our departure upon an enterprise as daring and as desperate as perhaps ever was undertaken.

The upper part of the Liddell runs entirely on Scottish ground, though only a very few miles from the English side. Lower down the river in itself

forms the boundary between the two countries. Soon we reached the point where it begins to do this, and, quick as thought, the news passed along the column that now only that little stream divided us from the land for which we were bound, and with the news a murmur of excitement. At length the point of passage was resolved upon and reached, and the excitement rose to fever heat.

Lord Pitsligo was the first to enter the water, but he was not first across. A party of Macdonalds, carried away by enthusiasm, dashed forward, and, getting in front of his lordship, joined hands and impeded his progress until their own ensign had gained the opposite bank, and planted his colours on English soil. The sight of the fluttering flag called forth a yell of triumph from the clansmen behind. Then followed a scene which said more for the enthusiasm than for the discipline of the army.

The Prince, after crossing, took his stand by the flagstaff, and we, by his orders, drew up near him to cover the passage in case of need. There was, however, not the slightest sign of opposition. The pipers of the Macdonalds stationed themselves hard by, and sent forth a triumphal pibroch as their clansmen forded the river. Excitement rose higher and higher as the men rushed down the bank, each

eager to outstrip his fellow. Regardless of the cries of the officers, they broke their ranks, and soon the river was alive with men from bank to bank. Each, as he set foot on English soil, drew his claymore and brandished it with cries of triumph. Many discharged their firelocks and pistols in the air, and the din and confusion became tremendous. At last, however, a sudden damper was cast upon the general enthusiasm.

After the Macdonalds came the Camerons, and young Lochiel, who led them, on drawing his claymore like the rest, slightly wounded his hand, so that the blood flowed. It was a mere scratch, yet it was sufficient to suddenly cast a shade on every face, as from mouth to mouth spread the dread whisper of an evil omen—so superstitious is the Highland nature, and so easily impressed by the veriest trifle which seems a sign of Fate.

The passage at length safely effected, the army halted for a little while to rest and re-form. During this time the Prince, attended by his staff, made his way to a neighbouring house, an old Border stronghold, called Stanegirthside, once the residence of a certain Captain of Bewcastle, whose misfortunes are recorded in one of Mr. Thurston's favourite ballads. We of Pitsligo's horse formed the escort by command of his Highness.

We had waited outside the house for some little time when, much to my surprise, I was summoned to attend the Prince.

'Mr. Falconar,' said he, as I entered, 'we have certain intelligence that the militia, now in garrison at Carlisle, so far from opposing us, is more likely to come over to our side. We are thus assured of the speedy possession of the city, and this decides us upon the course we would have our friends in Northumberland to pursue. We have therefore resolved to send you to them forthwith, carrying our instructions.'

I bowed, and he continued :

'We are further informed that expresses have been sent to Marshal Wade, at Newcastle, telling him of our advance. To a certainty he will march west to oppose us, so what you are sent to do must be done quickly.'

Here he consulted with Colonel Sullivan over a map, and then again went on.

'Carlisle being taken or masked, we shall take up a position to meet Wade twelve miles to the east at Brampton. There we shall be within easy reach of our Tynedale friends, and it is our wish that they join us there with all speed. Their appearance must have a good effect upon our local sympathizers, and by the time Wade faces us he may find the men,

not only of Northumberland, but also of Cumberland and Westmoreland at our back.'

I lost no time in obeying this command, but set out at once, taking Jock Corbitt with me, and leaving George and Hughie Dagg to continue the march on Carlisle. From Stanegirthside to Farney-cleugh is only some ten miles—ten miles of very rough and wild country, it is true; but my companion was well acquainted with it, and we arrived without mishap at the home of the Dags. After allowing our horses to rest and feed while we did the like, we took the road for Netherdyke.

We had not gone far before it commenced to snow—a thick-falling, blinding, baffling kind of snow it was, which caused us some inconvenience. But we quickly forgot all this when, a few miles from home, we heard news which caused our hearts to sink into our boots. Impatiently I spurred on, calling on Jock to follow, so that we might quickly ascertain whether the news were true or not.

Alas! we found it but too true. When we reached the old house we found no one there but a few frightened servants, who, with trembling lips, corroborated the evil tidings. That very morning a large party of armed horsemen, headed by Sir William Middleton, had appeared. The old Squire of the Bower happened to be in the house, and both



he and his old friend offered a vigorous resistance, so that it was not without bloodshed that they were at last overpowered and carried off. Miss Belliston had left for Newcastle, in hopes that she might be allowed to nurse her brother, who had been wounded in the scuffle. All the horses and arms had been carried off, not only from Netherdyke, but also from the Bower, from Hesleyside, and from every house whose owner was known or suspected to be a Jacobite. Here was heart-breaking news indeed.

My first care was to send Dick Wetherby to Newcastle for news of the Squire. I would have dearly liked to go myself, but I had the duty entrusted to me by the Prince to perform. A fruitless and hopeless task I found it. All enthusiasm and spirit had vanished from those of our party still at large, and the general feeling was one of apathy. I spent over a week riding hither and thither, but without avail. Some could not come because they had no horses, some because they had no arms, but the main excuse was that no French force had come with the Prince, and that, without such support, his enterprise was hopeless. I was at my wit's end. I pleaded, I threatened, but to no purpose. At length I saw I was only wasting my time, so I gave up the attempt in despair, and resolved to rejoin the army, as I had left it, with only Jock Corbitt at my back.

Now, all the time we had been at Netherdyke it had snowed, more or less, every day, so that the roads were almost blocked. It was a long and weary ride which lay before us, and my heart was heavy within me as I thought of the humiliation of thus returning as I set forth. How should I be able to face the Prince and tell him my tale, how endure the covert sneers of Mr. Secretary Murray, and the biting sarcasms of my Lord Elcho? Only one comfort I had, and that was the news of an improvement in the condition of the Squire.

We were approaching Haltwhistle, which lies about a dozen miles east of Brampton, when suddenly a troop of horsemen appeared in front, riding towards us. They were in uniform, but their uniform was strange to me, for, even in the uncertain light (it was growing dark) I could see they wore high fur caps; so it was with some uneasiness I awaited the moment of meeting them. When that moment came their leader reined up and motioned me to do likewise. He was a perfect stranger to me; judge then of my surprise when he addressed me by name.

‘I suppose you are Mr. Falconar, from Netherdyke?’ said he.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### IN WHICH I AM ENTRUSTED WITH ANOTHER MISSION.

THE party which stopped me turned out to be a troop of hussars in the Prince's service.

'I knew you by your gray horse, Mr. Falconar,' said the officer. 'A friend of yours—Mr. Belliston—described it to me, and there was no mistaking it. There are not many pieces of horse-flesh like that going about. Your friend has been on the look-out for you for several days. It is a wonder he is not with us now. Why, speak of the devil, here he comes!'

In effect, just at that moment George Belliston, followed by Hughie Dagg, came up.

'At last!' said he, as he wrung my hand. 'I thought you would never come. But where are the others? Where is my father?'

Not until we were alone did I answer these questions by telling my story. It is impossible to

describe the state of grief and shame into which it cast him—grief for his father, both grief and shame for the defection of our friends.

‘After all our promises of support, of men and money,’ he groaned, ‘what do we bring?’

‘Well, well,’ I said, striving to comfort him, ‘at all events we have done our best; so have your father and many others. The best can do no more. But tell me what has been going on. What news have you?’

He brightened up.

‘Glorious news!’ he cried. ‘Carlisle is ours—surrendered—city, castle and all; and Marshal Wade, hearing of it at Hexham, has fallen back on Newcastle.’

‘And the militia, and the people in general,’ I asked—‘have many joined us? His Highness seemed to expect it.’

‘Not one, I’m told. Although they refused to defend the place against us, they have not joined, but have sneaked off to their homes instead. Never mind, we have now the rest of the Highlanders with us. Six thousand men in all now follow the Prince. We start for London to-morrow.’

He spoke with the utmost confidence, as if success was assured, and our little band of six thousand men had nothing to do but march straight through

England and take possession of the capital. His confidence communicated itself to me. Like him, I thought nothing of the risk we ran in leaving old Marshal Wade's great army in our rear, knew nothing of the other great army which the Duke of Cumberland was mustering in the South. We were both very young and very inexperienced.

Next morning I saw the Prince. By great good fortune he was alone, for had Mr. Murray been there I know not how I should have told my news. As it was, I was overwhelmed with confusion and shame. I think he saw this, for he received me kindly, and when I told him my story he affected to make light of it, and took great pains to show that he cast no blame upon us. I left his presence greatly relieved, and full of gratitude towards him for the delicacy he had displayed in sparing my feelings, and concealing the chagrin which doubtless he felt, for he laid great store on attaching the English Jacobites to his cause.

The next time I had an interview with him was at Kendal, whither he had marched, as usual, on foot at the head of the army. This time Mr. Murray was with him.

'I have another mission to entrust to you, Mr. Falconar,' said the Prince, as I entered, 'a most important mission.'

I flushed up with pleasure. 'I only hope, sir,' said I, 'that it may be more successful than the last.'

'There may be some danger in it, I must inform you.'

'What matters, your Highness, so that I serve you?' I hastened to say.

'The chief danger will be in your liability to forgetfulness.'

'Forgetfulness?' I queried, not understanding.

He selected a paper from several which lay on a table, and handed it to me. It was a piece of blue paper, the body of its contents being printed, and the names and descriptions inserted in writing. It read as follows:

'Permit the bearer hereof, John Ogilvie, with his servant, Andrew Keir, and some baggage, freely to pass from Newcastle to Carlisle, and thence to London, upon their lawful business, giving them all manner of assistance they may stand in need of.

'Given at the headquarters at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the fifteenth day of November, 1745.

'GEORGE WADE.

'To all His Majesty's officers, civil and military, whom it may concern.'

I read through this free conduct, and turned to the Prince for further light.

'What you must not forget,' said he, 'is that *you*

are John Ogilvie and your man is called Andrew Keir. Mr. Murray will give you full instructions, and will furnish you with money. See that you spare it not, Speed in what you do is of all importance. And now, farewell, and God speed !'

So saying, he left the room, and Mr. Murray at once produced a letter, which he informed me I was to deliver as soon as possible, posting day and night, to a certain address in London. I must start instantly, and Marshal Wade's safe conduct would be my protection, though, should I be stopped and searched, the letter I carried would not incriminate me. Though in reality a message in cipher, it was apparently merely a list of books. In a few hours Hughie Dagg and I were as far as Lancaster on our way South.

It caused me a bitter pang to leave Cheviot behind, but this I was obliged to do at Lancaster and take to post horses. I gave him in charge of a certain innkeeper, promising him a handsome reward should he be able to keep the horse until I reclaimed him.

It would be tedious to describe our journey to London, made in miserably cold, snowy weather, though it was interesting enough to us at the time to see so many strange places. We were surprised to see that there did not seem to be much anxiety about the impending approach of the invading

Highland army. People in general talked of it as they would of some sort of harmless procession which was to pass, and seemed more curious than alarmed about it. I gave it out that we had narrowly escaped falling into their hands at Carlisle, and professed to be quite ignorant of their movements since we left that city.

At Lichfield we met the advance guard of the Duke of Cumberland's army, and finding the roads blocked by his artillery and baggage-train, very willingly, by our landlord's advice, left the main road and travelled by side roads until we rejoined it again further South. More than once we were stopped and questioned, but the production of our pass acted like a charm. The last time we were called upon to show it was at a village called Hendon, close to London, where was a military outpost.

At length we reached the outskirts of the great city, and after much journeying between what seemed endless rows of houses, and much inquiring of our way, we found ourselves at the George Inn in Holborn, where we were to put up. I lost not a moment, and immediately, though it was now dark, set out to deliver my letter.

It was addressed to 'Mr. John Foote, Bookseller, St. Martin's Lane,' and thither I walked with all speed.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE PRINCE'S LONDON FRIENDS.

I FOUND the bookseller behind his counter, handing up books to a boy, who, perched on a step-ladder, was placing them on the shelves. As I entered the shop the master turned to wait on me, a tall, thin elderly man in a suit of black, a pair of horn-rimmed spectacles, and a skull-cap.

‘Mr. Foote?’ I inquired.

‘That is my name, sir.’

‘I bring an order for you from the North.’

His eyes lit up with interest as he took the letter from me and looked at the address, without offering to open it, however.

‘You can put up the shutters and close the shop,’ said he to the boy, who at once began to carry out his order with great rattling of bolts and bars.

Meanwhile, Mr. Foote took snuff, and then said to me, with an air of affected indifference :

‘Who sends the order?’

This was the question I had been taught to expect, and, as instructed by Mr. Murray, I replied :

‘ Mr. Howell.’

‘ Oh,’ said the bookseller, still holding the unopened letter. ‘ That will do, boy. You can go home, and I will do the rest myself.’

As soon as the boy had taken himself off, which he did with great alacrity, the old gentleman locked the door of the shop, and invited me into a little back room, where he motioned me to sit down.

‘ Can you make yourself comfortable here for half an hour ?’ he asked.

‘ My orders were to do exactly as you directed me,’ I replied ; ‘ I will wait as long as you please.’

Upon this he left me, and presently I heard him leave the house by a side-door. I snuffed the candle and took up a book, but could not read, so anxious was I to see the upshot of my visit. A church clock close by chimed the quarter, then the half hour, and shortly afterwards I heard the front-door open and the sound as of several persons entering the house and ascending the stairs. Then Mr. Foote reappeared, and beckoned me to follow him. We went through a side-door from the shop and up a flight of stairs to a room situated over the shop, a stuffy, confined room, with closely-drawn blinds and two candles burning on the mantel-shelf. At a table in the centre sat two

men, both cloaked and masked, as if they had just left some masquerade. One of them had the letter I had brought spread out before him, and was engaged in deciphering it by means of a key. Mr. Foote, after ushering me in, retired with a low bow.

'Well, sir,' said he whom I took to be the elder and superior of the two masks, not the one who was busy with the letter, 'our correspondent speaks well of your trustworthiness and discretion, if you be indeed the person to whom he entrusted the letter. How am I to know you are not someone else, who by some means has obtained possession of it?'

I expected this question, and replied to it by asking another.

'And how am I to know, sir, that you are the person for whom it is intended?' I asked.

'By *this*,' said he at once, laying the half of a playing card, which had been torn in two, on the table.

'And you may know me by *this*,' I rejoined, drawing forth the other half of the same card, which Mr. Murray had given me, and fitting the pieces together.

Now there was perfect confidence on both sides, and I gave a full account of all I knew regarding the rising in the North and the movements of the Prince. I told, what was not thought safe to write,

even in cipher, how His Highness would, if possible, elude the Duke of Cumberland, get between him and London, and advance upon the capital by forced marches. There he hoped to find his friends prepared to receive and aid him.

When I had finished the two talked together privately for some time, and I could not help hearing such phrases as 'Depends upon the French,' and the like. This cast a damper on my hopes, for it was this very dependence upon French aid and waiting for the same which had led to the collapse of our people's part of the movement. I determined to venture a word of remonstrance on this point, and soon got a chance of doing so. The younger of the two, who had hitherto said little, began to question me concerning the few French engineers who were with the Prince, and as to the truth of an assertion in the letter I had brought, that a large contingent had sailed from France. Here was my opportunity.

'Gentlemen,' said I, 'pardon me if I seem presumptuous in offering you advice, but whether these news are true or not, I pray you let them not affect your design for co-operating with His Royal Highness. Once here, and in possession, the French Court will send aid promptly enough. If you seem inactive, they will hesitate before risking an expedition. Show them that you have confidence and courage to

support it, and they will dally no longer—not only they, but our English sympathizers as well.’

‘You are bold men, no doubt, you North-countrymen,’ interrupted the elder in a sarcastic tone. ‘Pity it is you did not set us a better example yourselves; but that matters not now. Be prepared to return with letters to His Highness at any moment. Mr. Foote will direct you where to take up your lodgings, so that you may be within call.’

I bowed, and they left the room, and shortly afterwards I heard the front-door shut. Mr. Foote then reappeared, and asked me to accompany him to the lodging indicated by his visitor. I told him of Hughie Dagg, and that it would be necessary to have him with me, so, engaging a hackney coach, we drove to the George, and picked up my companion.

The lodging to which we were conducted was in a little narrow street off Long Acre, and within a very short distance of Mr. Foote’s shop. The master of the house, by name Williams, was an active, stout man, who had served as a lieutenant in the army. He soon let us know that he was an ardent Jacobite, and was never tired of talking of the Prince and affairs in the North. There is no doubt that he was in constant communication with the persons to whom I had delivered the letter,

presumably the leaders of the Jacobite party in London, or at least their trusted agents. Every morning he was absent for some time, and I knew he had been with them, for he would tell me on his return that I need not be afraid to venture abroad, for no orders would come that day. For the first few days I stayed at home, fearing that a sudden mandate might come; but finding he was always right, and growing weary of the confinement, on the third day and for several days afterwards Hughie and I went out for a stroll.

It is probable our landlord had instructions not to lose sight of us, for when I proposed to go out, he would generally make some excuse to accompany us, and I was not at all averse to this, for he was a lively companion, and knew the town well. We visited coffee-houses and taverns, and mixed with their frequenters, listening to their talk, which was mostly of politics. I wondered to hear them speak so freely and so openly of the King, who did not seem to be a public favourite, also of Prince Charles Stuart, or the Young Chevalier, as they sometimes termed him. I heard few speak of him as the Young Pretender, but this was probably because Williams took us chiefly to places frequented by men of his own party. Perhaps, also, the glowing accounts of the Prince's wonderful march, and the

near expectation of his possible entry into the capital, caused many of the opposite side to be careful of their language, lest it might be remembered against them afterwards.

In our walks we saw many of the wonderful sights, and the noble buildings of London which were to our unaccustomed eyes perfect revelations of grandeur and stately beauty. We began, too, to understand something of the vastness of the great city, yet could never cease wondering that a place abounding with such splendour and such wealth should at the same time be so squalid and so unlovely to live in. So much were many of the streets obstructed by refuse and filth thrown out into them by the householders that they were, as Hughie Dagg observed, 'like midden steeds.' Then the horrible profanity heard on all sides, the open drunkenness, the flaunting vice, the abject poverty, the heartless selfishness, might have led one to suppose that here were gathered together all the moral as well as the organic refuse of the kingdom.

Hughie Dagg, for his part, was at first well enough pleased with the bustle and excitement and the constant novelty, but after the first few days the novelty wore off, and he began, as I could see, to sicken of the place. His nerves, like mine, began to suffer from the constant din. The rattling of

vehicles over the rough cobble stones of the pavements, the clamour of the church bells, the cries of those who sold all conceivable kinds of things in the streets, the noise caused by itinerant musicians and bawling ballad singers—all these combined to make such a horrible uproar as could be heard nowhere else except, perhaps, in Pandemonium. There were some sights, however, which tended to reconcile him to London life. These were the starting of the mail coaches with their fine teams, and the sight of the Park when the gentry were out riding and driving, where we saw some very pretty horse-flesh.

We had been about a week in town when I received a summons to go again to Mr. Foote's, and bring Mr. Williams with me. It was in the evening, and we were shown into the room upstairs, where we found the younger of the two men I had seen before waiting for us. He had little to say, except that I was to place myself and Dagg under the orders of Mr. Williams, and implicitly follow his instructions.

This was on the Thursday night. Next day was a memorable one in London.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

### BLACK FRIDAY.

WE were at breakfast when Williams, who had been early abroad, as usual, burst into the room with triumph and exultation written on his face.

‘We have just heard,’ he panted out, ‘that Prince Charles arrived at Derby on Wednesday. Glorious news! He has outgeneralled Cumberland, as he outgeneralled Cope and Wade, and has got in between the Duke’s army and London. By this time he must be at Leicester, to say the least.’

‘Huzza!’ cried Hughie Dagg. ‘I’se for nae mair breakfast. Let’s awa’ out.’

To say truth, the news was of such an exciting nature that I, like Hughie, cared to eat no more, and we all sallied forth to see how the news was being received in the town. As we passed along we could see, from the manner of the people, that it had already begun to buzz about. Hitherto there had been but little excitement as the various accounts

of the Prince's progress came in, but now it was different. The Hanoverian party had counted on the Duke, but now that stay had failed them there was nothing between the Highland host and themselves except the notoriously feeble array at Finchley, consisting, for the most part, of the London train-bands. And in these who could trust? Were they to be depended upon for a moment to stand against the furious onslaught of these terrible mountaineers who had already defeated and dispersed King George's regular troops? Few thought so, for had not the name of the train-bands become almost a byword for unsoldierly bearing, and did not the print-sellers' shop-windows teem with caricatures of them, bearing such legends as 'King and Country! Shop and Family! I won't fight out of the Parish'? Besides, there were news from France of a huge preparation for the invasion of England in the interest of King James, and already a considerable number of French troops had succeeded in landing at Montrose. So, with the Prince almost at their gates, and the French perhaps even now in the Channel, the people of London were fairly beside themselves with fear.

As we passed along, we could see the shopkeepers gathering in little groups and talking together with white faces. Some of them were already beginning to put up their shutters, and several early birds were

having their goods and chattels carried out for removal. At length we reached the Griffin Tavern in Holborn, where Williams appeared to be well known, for the landlord greeted him cordially, and showed us into a private sitting-room. The taverns and coffee-houses reaped a rich harvest that day, for they were filled from morning till evening by crowds eager to hear or anxious to tell the latest news. The Griffin was no exception, for the house was packed, early as it was in the day, and where we sat we could hear the people talking all together in high and excited voices. But there were no notes of fear; joy and triumph were the predominant notes, for the Griffin was a Jacobite resort, and few of the Hanoverian way of thinking came there.

It would seem Williams had brought us here for a set purpose, for we had not been long in the private room before the landlord ushered in to us several men who were known to Williams, for he greeted them familiarly and conversed with them for some time, introducing us to them as 'the messengers.' They seemed quite to understand what he meant, as if they had been told of us before, and no sooner did they withdraw than the landlord brought in another batch, who went through the same performance as the others. This was repeated until we had been made known to at least a score.

I noticed that these men, without exception, were well set up, and looked as if they had been soldiers, though they wore civilian garb.

Meanwhile, the panic had increased and was increasing, and the most extraordinary sights were to be seen, and still more extraordinary rumours were bruited abroad. The King had fled, so said some. The King had been seized and flung into the Tower by the Jacobite leaders, said others. Prince Charles had arrived, having posted on before his troops, and his father had been proclaimed at St. James's, so said yet another lot of babblers. Such were some of the false rumours.

As for the realities, many of which I saw with my own eyes, they were astonishing enough. There was scarcely a shop to be seen open, and as the evening approached even the taverns and inns began, perforce, to close their doors, for bands of desperadoes, who seemed to have sprung up out of the earth, began to scour the town. They marched into the taverns and vintners', and helped themselves to what liquors they fancied, paying nothing. Then, flushed with drinking, they sallied forth and proceeded to greater extremes. Shops and houses were broken into and pillaged, and people were laid hold of in the streets and robbed. If they resisted they were maltreated, and in some

cases killed outright. Law and order seemed to be at an end, and the watchmen were nowhere to be seen. Indeed, in the confusion and uproar, they would have been useless.

It was in the more retired streets that most of the scenes of violence and pillage took place. The main thoroughfares were safer to traverse, being thronged with people, who were either wandering aimlessly about, possessed by the general feeling of unrest, or hastening to remove their effects. Here a sort of rough order was kept. In many instances the marauders were set upon by the mob, and roughly handled. I saw a fellow, who had entered a shop in Holborn and stolen some trumpery articles of mercery, suffer the extreme penalty, without the formality of the law. The shopkeeper, seeing him, had followed with loud cries of 'Stop, thief!' and the poor wretch was seized and so belaboured by the cudgels of the crowd that he died under the punishment.

There seemed to be a strong Jacobite element amongst the crowds. Many went so far as to sport the white cockade, and everywhere, without the slightest check, ballad singers bawled forth ditties in praise of King James and the Prince, and derisive of King George and the Hanoverian succession. And all this time fresh and alarming rumours were

born and circulated with magical speed, so that the Whigs who had anything to lose became each moment more fear-stricken, and the supporters of King James more jubilant.

It was within the City, however, that panic raged highest. The gates had been closed and guarded, the shops and warehouses closed and barricaded. People with money in the banks became fearful concerning it, and crowded, like flocks of frightened sheep, struggling with one another to reach the counters. The run on the Bank of England was so heavy that the clerks were instructed to pay all demands in sixpences and small change, and thus gain time.

Some said—I do not know with what truth, but think there was something in it—that King George was prepared to fly, and had the crown jewels and other valuables embarked on ship-board in the Thames, all ready for his own embarkment should news arrive of Prince Charles being close upon London, or of his having gained an advantage over Cumberland.

It was late when we returned to our lodging, worn out with the excitement of that memorable day. Fatigued as I was, I slept but little, being filled with hopeful expectation of what the morrow should bring forth.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### KING GEORGE.

THE first thing in the morning Williams came to me, and we had a private talk, in which he let me into the secret of the plans of the London friends of the Prince. The main feature in these plans was nothing less than the seizure of the person of the King. This was to be effected to-morrow—Sunday—morning, as he was leaving church. The royal escort would be composed of men almost entirely secretly favourable to our side. This had been arranged by those who had the power to do so, said Williams. The King's coach was to be surrounded, seized, and driven off to Millbank, where a wherry would be waiting to convey him to the Tower. There all was prepared, and the moment he was safely within the walls steps would be taken for disarming such of the troops in London and at Finchley as might be loyally disposed, though it was not considered there would be any great number

of them. King James III. was to be publicly proclaimed, and, if the Prince had not arrived, a despatch was to be sent to him, urging him to haste, and, simultaneously, news of the King's arrest was to be despatched to France, where the expedition was almost ready to sail. The Highland army was to halt at Finchley, where, reinforced by the London Jacobites, including the soldiery brought over to our side, it was to hold the Duke and Marshal Wade in check.

These, and many other details of this notable plot, did I listen to. Only the names of the leaders were kept secret for the present. But the part which pleased me best of all was the announcement that I had been chosen to carry to the Prince the news of the capture of his enemy and his own approaching triumph. I was so elated that I had great difficulty in restraining myself sufficiently to listen to the instructions for playing my part.

When Williams had concluded, he went abroad, charging me not on any account to stir out before his return, but to be in readiness to take horse at any moment. It was near six in the evening when he came back with the news that an express had arrived from the North, and that the Prince and his people, instead of having left Derby on Thursday, as expected, would not leave until Friday morning.



Sunday, the day of the proposed attempt, came at last, though it seemed to me as if it would never dawn, and, attended by Hughie Dagg, I strolled down to St. James's Park in the forenoon, as instructed. A great many people were there, strolling about, just as we were, and I noticed that a passer-by would every now and again look keenly at us and give a glance of recognition. These were the men to whom we had been introduced by Williams at the Griffin, but none spoke to us—only looked and passed on.

We had been directed to meet our landlord at 'the gun,' which we soon found, and there he was, lounging beside it.

'All is prepared,' he said, speaking in a quick, eager tone. 'Are you ready to play your part?'

I quickly assured him we were, and we all walked over to the roadway.

'You see that carriage by the garden gate?' asked Williams.

I looked and nodded. A plain coach with four horses stood by the garden gate. The coachman and footmen wore the royal livery, and a squadron of life-guards was drawn up close by.

'In a few minutes,' continued Williams, 'the King will come through the garden and enter the carriage. Stand you here, and wait by the road-

side. When the carriage arrives opposite this point, it will be stopped, the escort overpowered, and our people will take their place; then we make straight for Millbank with the King. Follow us to the Park gate, where two horses will be waiting for you. The man with them will guide you to the road for the North. Then lose not a moment, but gallop for your lives until you reach the Prince. Tell him all you know, and that the King is in the Tower; then bring him with all speed to London. You understand ?

‘Perfectly,’ said I. ‘You may depend upon us.’

Williams left us, and mingled with the crowd about the roadway. There was a stir near the garden gate, and presently the royal carriage started, escorted by the life-guards. As it drew near, we could see King George, an elderly, pale-faced man in a dark tie, wig, and plain brown coat—a very ordinary-looking individual indeed. Two gentlemen were seated opposite him, and as the carriage approached one of them thrust his head out of the window, and looked eagerly about. There was something about the turn of that head and neck strangely familiar to me. I had seen it before somewhere, but could not at the time remember where. Since then it has struck me that, unless I was very much mistaken, the head and neck belonged

to the elder of the two masked gentlemen I had met at Mr. Foote's. I saw him now, as he looked eagerly around, catch sight of Williams, and a significant look passed between them. I thought that the moment had come, and that the signal would be given; but the carriage had not yet reached the appointed spot, and just before it did so it suddenly stopped.

It was an exciting moment. There sat the King, very calm and composed, and though there was much muttering and grumbling amongst the people, and not a few disloyal and threatening exclamations, he took not the slightest notice, but remained calm and quiet, with a face expressing neither anger nor concern, merely passive indifference.

Suddenly there was a movement in the crowd, and my heart beat quickly, for now, surely, I thought the moment had come, especially when I saw Williams take a whistle from his pocket and hold it in readiness.

But the movement in the crowd had been caused by the guardsmen of the escort pressing back the people to form a clear space on the road, and just as Williams was lifting the whistle to his lips a horseman dashed up at a gallop along this clear space, and pulled up at the side of the royal carriage. There, doffing his hat, he handed a folded paper

to the gentleman who had looked out of the window, the gentleman between whom and Williams had passed that significant look. As he opened the paper and commenced to read a change came over his countenance, and then another change. The first change was to a look of annoyance, the second to one of joy, though his smile seemed somewhat forced; then he said something to the King, and thrust his head out of the window once more. Williams still stood with the whistle in his hand. Surely, now, the time was come at last.

Yes, it must have come, for we heard the voice of the gentleman saying something to the people around, but what it was we could not make out. Whatever it was, it caused a most extraordinary commotion. The people commenced to sway and push towards the carriage with loud cries mingled with huzzas. We rushed forward, expecting to see the escort unhorsed and our friends in their places. But what was our surprise and consternation when we heard that the loud cries of the crowd were 'God save the King!' 'God save King George!' 'Down with the Pretender!'

I was dumfounded. What could have happened? There sat the King—I noticed it in spite of my agitation—calm and unchanged, as indifferent to

the cries of loyalty as he had been to those of sedition.

Presently Williams came running over to us, disappointment and vexation painted on his face.

'All is lost,' cried he. 'The Prince is in full retreat for the North, with the Duke at his heels. Shift for yourselves, and keep your own counsel.'

Next moment he was gone.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### A FLYING VISIT TO NETHERDYKE.

WE were now placed in a very awkward predicament. We found ourselves literally alone in London, for both the house of Williams and the shop of Mr. Foote were closed when we went to them. The probability is they had fled to elude possible arrest, but this I never knew. To add to our difficulty, my supply of money was running very short, and had we not been fortunate enough, at the end of an anxious week, to get a passage on board a ship bound for Newcastle, I know not what would have become of us. The ship was a collier, and after a tempestuous voyage, in which, being light, she pitched and rolled heavily, we cast anchor in Shields harbour.

We dared not venture to enter Newcastle, but a note sent to Mr. Hodgson brought the worthy hoastman down the river, and glad I was to see his kindly face again. He confirmed my surmise

about the danger of going to Newcastle, and said it would be as much as our lives were worth to be seen there, and that he thought our best plan would be to take shipping for the Continent, and remain there until the troubles were blown over. He would furnish me with money for our expenses, and send more as it was required. I thanked him warmly for his kind offer, but begged him, before I decided on our future movements, to give me an account of the present condition of affairs in general, and of the Squire and our other friends in particular.

He said the Squire was very ill indeed. His anxiety about George had aggravated his condition until it became so serious that the authorities had allowed him to be taken home to Netherdyke. His sister and Mrs. Thurston had accompanied him, and the later reports concerning him were so alarming that not only Mrs. Farnaby and her daughter, but even Mr. Farnaby, who had never been at Netherdyke before, had gone to see him.

I asked next if he had heard anything of George. He told me how the Prince, with his army, had got safely back to Scotland, after leaving a garrison in Carlisle, which city the Duke of Cumberland was at present besieging. It was feared that George Belliston might be one of the garrison, and if so, his case was hopeless, for the place could not possibly

hold out, and the Duke would show no mercy to those taken in arms. But nothing was positively known about George's whereabouts. It might be that he had accompanied the Prince across the Border.

Next he proceeded to tell me how Simon Belliston was still in Newcastle, and how he had now formally gone over to the Whig side, publicly boasting of his loyalty to King George.

His budget completed, the worthy man was about to hand me the money he had offered to carry us abroad, but I declined it with many thanks, for my mind was made up. First, I would go, at all hazards, to Netherdyke and see my dear old friend once more. Then I would make my way into Scotland and rejoin George with the army of the Prince. In spite of all the hoastman's arguments I stuck to this, and that very day Hughie and I procured horses and set off. Taking care to give Newcastle a wide berth, we duly arrived without mishap in North Tynedale.

Need I say that I was kindly welcomed at the old home? First of all, the dogs and hounds in the kennels set up a joyous clamour as I rode past them into the stable-yard. This brought out the grooms and servants, and scarcely had I left the saddle when I found myself in the arms of Miss Belliston, who



kissed me tenderly, and welcomed me like a mother receiving back her son. And there were tears in her kind eyes, too, and I knew that mingled with her joy at seeing me again a sore trouble filled her brave and tender heart. There was a question, too, in these eyes, a question, they said plainly, which she dreaded to ask. Quickly I understood, and quickly I answered her mute appeal.

‘You wish to know of George,’ I said. ‘I left him well and happy.’

‘Thank God!’ was all she said, a fervent, heartfelt outburst of gratitude more eloquent than many words.

She led me into the house, which seemed strangely changed and unlike its old self, so hushed it was and so silent, with the servants going about on tip-toe and speaking with lowered voices. Kate Farnaby met us in the hall, looking, I thought, more beautiful than ever, if that was possible, and with that sweet, low voice of hers she gave me welcome, and led me to her father and mother, who were seated together in the oak parlour. I looked at the empty elbow-chair by the fire with wistful eyes, and Miss Belliston understood me as I had understood her, and led me gently upstairs.

Mr. Thurston was sitting on a chair by the bed, and on the pillow lay a face—a face I did not know at first for that of my dear old Squire, my second

father, so wasted and worn was it, like a gray shadow on the snowy linen. But when, after I had returned the silent pressure of Mr. Thurston's hand, I bent over and looked into the face on the pillow, a smile of recognition came into the eyes, and I knew them for the eyes of my dear friend—the eyes which had always had in them a kindly light for me. Soon the smile waned, and they took a plaintive, questioning expression. The pale lips moved.

'But, George,' they said faintly—'where is he? Do you bring bad news, Gilbert?'

'George is quite well,' I replied. 'He is with the Prince. I have but called to see you, and soon I shall be by his side again, and I'll never leave him until I see him safe at home.'

A grateful look rewarded me. A thin, transparent hand crept from beneath the sheet and sought for mine, on which it bestowed a feeble grasp.

'God bless you, Gil!' said George's father. 'You are a dear, good fellow!'

I saw a tear trickle to the pillow, and Mr. Thurston now gently drew me away towards the door. Here he paused.

'He must not be excited,' said he in a whisper. 'Better go now. You will see him again later on.'

I went softly down the stairs. It had been my intention to leave for the North that same day, but

Miss Belliston would hear of no such thing. She said that, come what might, her boy, so she called me, should stay at least one night at home. One of my reasons for going was that someone might have seen me who would give information of my being there, and perhaps I might be arrested; but the brave old lady had thought of that, and had sent for Dick Wetherby, who had readily promised to keep a look-out all night at the ford.

How pleasant, how restful, after all the wanderings and the restless excitement of the last weeks, was that evening spent in the old house! The Squire had dozed over to sleep, and Mr. Farnaby and his wife were watching beside him when we shut ourselves into the oak parlour—Miss Belliston, Kate, Mr. Thurston and myself. In reply to their eager inquiries I gave them the whole history of our adventures, and told them of the Prince and how he bore himself. But it was of George that these two fond women longed most to hear. I could see that Kate, though she was shy of asking much about him herself, cast grateful glances upon her aunt at each fresh question concerning him. And it was when Miss Belliston was out of the room, and Mr. Thurston sat musing by the fire, that she charged me with many kind messages to her cousin, and at last, with a charming blush, she produced a

letter and begged me to deliver it to him. Then I was sure of what I had guessed at before, when I saw them together in the Newgate of Newcastle.

Later on, as Mr. Thurston and I sat together, he told me of what had taken place since I left. His story related chiefly to Simon, and a sorry tale it was.

‘You remember the night when you saw the stranger come out of the Long Room,’ he began—‘the stranger who told us he was Buchanan, the Jacobite spy, from France? It turned out he was no such person, but an emissary of some of the Squire’s friends, sent to entrap him into an appointment with a view to having him seized and shut up until there was no longer any fear of his risking life and estate for what they considered a hopeless cause. It was intended as a perfectly friendly action to save him from himself and his sense of duty. Mr. Farnaby, who was one of the chiefs of the plot, has told me all about it, and says there were Jacobites as well as Whigs involved in it. Would that it had succeeded, then had not my old friend been in his present sad plight.’

‘Simon was right, then, when he suspected a trap?’ I remarked.

‘Nothing of the kind. Simon did not suspect. He knew. The whole arrangement was perfectly

well known to him, but it did not suit his purpose that his brother should be prevented from joining the rising, so he contrived to be carried off instead, as you know. He left the Squire to suppose that his attempted arrest was the vindictive work of the Whigs, and that he, Simon, had foiled their evil plan. Moreover, he knew that the outrage on himself would incite his brother to greater zeal against the Hanoverian cause, and act as a spur to his joining the opposite party in arms. Now do you begin to see his purpose ?

‘I think I do,’ said I. ‘Yet, surely, it cannot be as I suspect ! No man could be so vile. His own brother !’

‘I have something else to tell you, which may perhaps convince you,’ continued the old gentleman. ‘George, no doubt, has never told you who it was that assisted him to escape, and so join the Prince. Being bound to secrecy he would not, but I am not so bound, and I will tell you. It was his uncle, Simon Belliston, who both planned and carried out his escape. Now you will see clearly his drift. His brother and nephew out of the way, who but himself is the next heir to Netherdyke ? Supposing them both to go out against the Government, they both may be killed ; supposing they are not, and the rising fails, the result is practically the same, for

they are likely to perish on the scaffold or go into exile. Even supposing it to succeed, he is no worse off than he was before, only he must not show himself too zealous on either side until he sees which way the wind blows. He enrolls himself amongst those pledged to defend Newcastle for King George, but tells his Jacobite friends he only does it as a veil the better to serve their cause. Thus he temporizes until news comes of the retreat from Derby; then he thinks the Prince's cause is hopeless, and goes over openly to the other side.'

'But he may find himself mistaken after all!' I cried. 'There are many blows to be struck yet. Our forces are gathering and growing in Scotland, and the traitor may yet find he has taken the wrong side.'

'I devoutly hope so,' gravely said Mr. Thurston. 'But the Government forces are now in very different condition, both as to numbers and discipline, to what they were at first. Then our French allies——'

'There it is!' I interrupted bitterly. 'The old story over again. Our French allies! Why can we not depend upon ourselves? Counting upon them has been our undoing, as far as England is concerned. The Highland clans did not wait for our French allies. They acted like brave men, and

came forth to stand the hazard of the die, trusting only in their valour and the justice of their cause.'

'Very true, Gilbert,' sighed my old friend. 'Had our countrymen displayed one tithe of their courage and loyalty, the good old cause had been triumphant ere now. But to return to Simon. I had a letter yesterday from Mr. Hodgson, in which he tells me something more about that person. He says he saw Simon a few days ago, and asked him for the money which you will remember was entrusted to him some time ago to send to Netherdyke—the money which the Squire intended sending to the Prince. Well, Simon told him plainly that the money was raised on the security of property which would in all probability revert to himself before long; and that it was his purpose to keep it, rather than see it thrown away on a foolhardy enterprise.'

'Then he is little better than a thief as well as a traitor,' said I; 'but let us hope he will never enjoy poor George's heritage.'

'I scarce think he will,' remarked Mr. Thurston significantly. 'His own hands are not altogether so clean as he thinks in the eyes of the Government. Time will show. You would be glad to find Mr. Farnaby and the Squire reconciled and good friends. It is all owing to that dear girl Kate. She has

brought them together, and conquered her uncle's prejudices against her father.'

'I am truly glad of it, and so will George be when he hears of it. Would that I were with him again!'

'Would you were both safely back at Netherdyke!' sighed Mr. Thurston.

'And so I hope we shall be, and that before long,' I said to cheer him. 'And when that day comes, let us hope that not only George, but the King also, may come to his own again.'

'Amen,' said Mr. Thurston.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### BACK TO THE ARMY.

I SAW the old Squire again before I left, and the parting was affecting on both sides. I knew I should never see him again, and I think he had the same thought, as his wistful eyes followed me to the door of the room. Then I bade farewell to the rest, and at length Hughie and I were once more in the saddle and bound for the Border. We had two of the Netherdyke horses, and arranged for the other two to be sent back to their owner in Shields.

As before, we travelled by Tynehead, and had many adventures by the way, which I will not fully describe here, only barely mention. Thus, at the house of a Jacobite gentleman, in Roxburghshire, during a meeting, we were pounced upon by a party of English dragoons, and lodged in the Tower prison at Hawick. From thence we were being conveyed to Carlisle by a company of yeomanry cavalry, when, through Hughie Dagg's contrivance, we managed to

escape. Then we met with two deserters from the Prince's army, Highlanders who had established a private still amongst the hills, and who, recognising us, treated us to the best of their hospitality for several days.

At length, in the guise of cattle-drovers, we set off on foot, for our horses had been taken from us by the soldiers, making by the drove-road for Falkirk, where we heard the Prince lay. We came up with the army at Bannockburn, the day after the battle of Falkirk, in which the Prince had routed General Hawley, successor in command to Sir John Cope, and thus I met my friends and acquaintances in the flush of another victory.

It was some time before I was able to see George Belliston; and then, to my great joy, I found him well and hearty. Jock Corbitt was with him, and, after our first greeting and mutual inquiries, the giant, with a look of mysterious import on his face, said he had something to show me, and we all followed him to where the horses were picketed. What was my surprise—my joyful surprise—when I saw a gray horse, the exact counterpart of Cheviot! Could it be he? Impossible! But I was not kept long in doubt. The animal gave a joyful whinny as he heard my voice, and the next moment his taper muzzle was nestling in my bosom, my arm thrown round it.

'We fand him at Lancaster as we cam back,' said Jock. 'Sae I just e'en brought him wi' me.'

Hughie Dagg was not long in want of a mount either, for that very day he bought an excellent charger from one of the Highlanders. It was part of the spoil of battle, and he secured it for the sum of two shillings, saddle and bridle and all, the seller considering he had made a very good bargain.

George and I had a good deal to talk over, of course. I had to tell of my visit to Netherdyke, and of the illness of his father, which I treated as lightly as possible, not to alarm him. Then I had to deliver Kate's kind messages and her letter, which appeared to afford him unbounded satisfaction, for he was for ever pulling it out and reading it over and over again with beaming eyes. This prevented him, I fear, paying as much attention as I wished to the tale of our London adventures. When I had done I made him tell me of the retreat from Derby, and what had taken place since. He had not words, he said, to express the great change which had come over the Prince when, against his wish, the retreat was decided upon. Before, he was the most sanguine and light-hearted of mortals, marching with swinging step at the head of the column; afterwards, he became moody and melancholy, and lagged behind with the rear-guard. Since that time he

seemed to confide only in Mr. Secretary Murray, Colonel Sullivan, and the other Irish officers, and shunned the company of Lord George Murray, his Lieutenant-General, and the Scottish noblemen and chiefs, because of their refusal to march upon London. Clearly the relations between the Prince and his adherents were strained to the utmost.

Since returning to Scotland, the army had been increased by about four thousand men, including a small force of the Royal Scots and others, from France, which had landed at Montrose. So, with a force of nine thousand—the largest he had ever yet mustered, and fresh from the defeat of Hawley—the Prince began to recover his spirits, as he sat down to besiege Stirling. But his elation was doomed soon to be dashed with disappointment.

There was much grumbling among the chiefs that the battle of Stirling had not been followed up, and that the enemy had been allowed to fall back quietly on Edinburgh to refit. After a fortnight wasted before Stirling, they resolved to leave it untaken, and retreat into the Highlands. Much against the grain, the Prince was obliged to accede to this, and the retreat began. This was on February 1, and the same day the Duke of Cumberland, who had assumed the chief command, marched out of Edinburgh in pursuit, with a powerful army.

It would be tedious to tell of the events of the next two months, during which we marched North, carrying on a desultory warfare with detached bodies of the enemy's Highland levies, and all the while suffering from want of supplies, especially fodder. So much was this latter want felt, and so much were our mounts worn out by forced marches, that before long only about a tenth of our number was left with horses to ride. This necessitated the bulk of our regiment being transformed into an infantry corps. Such as still remained mounted were drafted into Lord Kilmarnock's command, and of that number were George Belliston, Jock Corbitt, Hughie Dagg, and myself.

When we reached Inverness, we found the Prince and the greater part of the Highlanders there before us. We had intelligence that the Duke of Cumberland was concentrating his army at Aberdeen, where he could gather supplies by sea; but we scarcely expected he would take the field until the spring. For our part, we were still sadly distressed for want of provisions, and our forces were melting away daily by desertion and sickness.

And still, in face of all this—our enemy's increasing and our waning strength—the wretched misunderstandings between the Prince and his adherents went on. Still he inclined more and more to Mr.

Murray and the Irish-French officers, so that Lord George and the chiefs felt themselves more and more estranged. Not that their loyalty and devotion ever varied, only there was present that unhappy spirit of dissension which jealousy, pique, and temper can gradually build up until it is almost stronger for evil than open revolt. A little incident which I will recount will give an idea of the position of affairs better than any description.

I happened to be in the Prince's presence one day, when he began to question me closely concerning my London experiences, and pressed me to give a particular account of all that had befallen. When I had concluded he turned round with a bitter smile to those present.

'Did I not tell you, gentlemen,' said he, 'that we ought to have gone on? London, you see, was practically in our hands, the King himself our prisoner, but for our timorous retreat. I hope it may be a lesson for us all for the future.'

The chiefs exchanged uneasy glances, and I could see their proud eyes sparkling with rage as they observed Murray regarding them with a sneering smile. They said no word, however, but bowed and left the presence, and I followed them, feeling very uncomfortable. The secretary's behaviour on this occasion was of a piece with his general conduct.

He was for ever at the Prince's ear, poisoning his mind against any he supposed might interfere with the influence he possessed over his master, and was always glad to foment any cause of quarrel which would advance his own self-seeking designs.

On April 8 the Duke of Cumberland, with a well-appointed army, marched out of Aberdeen, and by the carelessness, or worse, of our people was allowed to ford the Spey at Fochabers, though the natural strength of the position is so great that a hundred men could hold it against ten thousand. This was our first great mistake of this part of the campaign.

The second great mistake was made when, at a council of war, it was resolved to surprise the Duke's army by a night attack. Our worn-out, starving men marched all night, over rough and broken ground; and having tasted nothing all day but a single biscuit each, it is no wonder that the dawn was upon us before we were within striking distance, and the opportunity of surprising the enemy was lost. We were forced to retrace our steps to our position on Drumossie or Culloden Moor, five miles east of Inverness, and, worn out with want of sleep, hungry and cold, we flung ourselves on the wet, mossy ground to snatch such repose as we might have time for. But the pangs of hunger were too much for some of the clansmen, and, to the number

of two thousand, they left the army, to seek food in Inverness and the neighbouring hamlets.

And now the third and greatest mistake of all was committed. Lord George Murray proposed that the army be withdrawn beyond the River Nairn, where was a position more favourable for the manœuvres of the clansmen, and almost inaccessible to the Duke's forces. Here we would have time to await the return of the stragglers, and the arrival of considerable reinforcements which were on the way. But the Prince would hear of nothing short of giving battle the moment the enemy appeared. He would not retreat before the Duke. With five thousand worn-out, famished men he would stand before double the number, fresh, well-fed, well-disciplined, and fully armed.

While the dispute still went on news came that the Duke was close upon us. There was therefore no time now to retreat in order. The die was cast, and the cause of the Stuart dynasty was committed to the issue of an action the result of which was almost a foregone conclusion.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### 'DARK CULLODEN'S FATEFUL DAY.'

WE had not slept long after our return from the night march when we were aroused from our cold couch by the boom of a cannon, followed by another, and another. These were signals for our stragglers to return ; but few of them heard, or, if they heard, heeded.

At seven o'clock our trumpets sounded 'boot and saddle,' and we mounted and took up our assigned position. It had been raining and snowing when we lay down on the wet moor at five, and the showers had continued at intervals ever since, so that we were wet to the skin and cramped with cold, as well as famishing with hunger.

Soon the bivouac was astir with the bustle of marching and counter-marching, and our spirits began to rise as the inspiring strains of the pipes, trumpets and drums filled the heavy, moisture-laden air.

No time was lost in forming the order of battle. Our little troop, under Lord Kilmarnock, happened to be drawn up close by Culloden House, when the Prince came out and trotted past, escorted by the life-guards. I never saw him looking better, spite of the fatigue of the night-march, which he had shared with us, and of all the anxiety he must have felt on such an occasion. He looked the picture of high spirits and dauntless resolution as, without checking his charger’s pace, he smilingly returned our salute.

One thing which gave me a better opportunity than I otherwise should have had of observing the various phases of the battle was my appointment as extra aide-de-camp, a distinction which I think I owed more to the well-known powers of Cheviot than to any good qualities of my own. It was Mr. Ker of Gradon, the Prince’s aide, who brought me the order, and I at once followed him to where, on a rising ground behind the line of battle, His Royal Highness was posted with the headquarters staff. Soon I was busily at work, work which put poor, half-starved Cheviot’s mettle to the test, for the ground was rough with heather and soft in many places, yet I never needed to use the spur; the generous creature almost seemed to know that the task we were engaged in needed his utmost speed, and he entered into it heart and soul.

Picture to yourself the bleak and barren moor of Drumossie, the ground sloping away to the north, where stood Culloden House with the sullen, slate-coloured sea behind. Overhead a gray, pallid sky, with black, low-lying clouds sailing towards us, borne on the raw east wind, and breaking upon us in showers of sleet and snow.

Facing the east wind and the east, where lay the enemy, our forces were drawn up. The first line, consisting of the Highland clans, stretched across the moor, its left resting on Culloden House, and its right protected by some park walls. Cannon we had in the centre and on each flank, these latter supported by cavalry, though scant in number.

The second line, commanded by the celebrated Brigadier Stapleton, of Fontenoy fame, was made up principally of the infantry of the Irish brigades from France. Behind this was the eminence on which the Prince had taken his position.

In the rear were the reserves, consisting of detachments from various clans and corps, Lord Kilmarnock's horse being on the left.

So were we drawn up that morning when, through the murky air, we saw the serried array of the Duke's army appear in sight, halt, and form line of battle, a long streak of vivid scarlet with a streak of white beneath, formed by the gaiters. From those

frequent gaps in their formation we knew there grinned forth cannon, though we as yet could not make them out. A cloud of cavalry hovered on either flank, and in the rear we well knew they kept a strong reserve.

There was a hush of expectancy on our part as we stood looking on and waiting further developments. These were not long in coming. We saw the distant red line and the masses behind begin to move like a wall towards us, and louder and more distinct grew the sound of their bands, the squealing of their fifes, and the roll of their drums.

Then followed a spell of manœuvring on the flanks, just as swordsmen fence for an opening before engaging in dead earnest. In this I think they had the advantage, for they gained the support of a swamp for their right flank, which we would have done well to have obtained for our left.

About this time I had occasion to ride along our first line, and thus had an opportunity of observing the attitude of the clansmen there. All along the right of the line the men under Lord George Murray, the Athol brigade, the Camerons, Stuarts of Appin, Farquharsons, Macintoshes and Frazers—all these stood like greyhounds straining in the leash, eyes on fire, and hands nervously clutching the hilts of their claymores. There was no mistake

about their humour. The Macintoshes especially seemed half mad with excitement. It was their first time to be under fire.

But when I reached the left wing, where stood the Macdonalds—the flower of the army, as they boasted—how different was the sight! There they stood, the men of Clanranald, Keppoch, Glengarry, and Glencoe, sullen and sulky, like a pack of spoiled children—they who were wont to be the most eager for action and ever the foremost in the fray.

‘For God’s sake, Mr. Falconar,’ said Keppoch, as I reached him where he stood expostulating with his men—‘for God’s sake, will you go to His Highness and tell him that the Macdonalds are dissatisfied with their position in the line of battle?’

‘Yes, sir,’ broke in one of the captains; ‘tell him we have fought on the right wing ever since Bannockburn, and we claim it as our right to fight there to-day.’

‘It is better that they should be humoured,’ said Keppoch, drawing me aside and speaking low. ‘There is yet time to change the order.’

I promised to carry the message, and darted off like the wind for headquarters, but scarcely had I gone a hundred yards when our cannon began to open fire. Then those of the Duke replied, and by the time I reached headquarters grape and round-

shot were ploughing thick and fast through our ranks ; indeed, just as I reached the Prince one of the latter missiles struck the ground at his horse’s feet, covering him with mud ; then, rebounding, it carried off the head of one of the guardsmen behind him.

‘Nonsense,’ said Colonel Sullivan, when I had delivered Keppoch’s message—‘childish nonsense ! It is too late now to make any change. They will fought well enough when the push comes.’

And so anyone would have thought, but we shall see how it turned out.

The Duke’s artillery, well served, did fearful execution, while ours did not seem to have much effect. Still, we remained inert while they pounded away, for it had been decided that we should fight on the defensive. But man proposes and God disposes. The enemy showed no sign of advancing, being content with the dreadful havoc his artillery fire was causing in our ranks.

Unused to remain thus passive, the clansmen chafed with impatience, and fumed as they saw their comrades mowed down at every shot. For nearly an hour this lasted, and then they began to show signs that they could stand it no longer, and Lord George Murray sent to ask leave to charge. Before his messenger could return, however, the crisis had arrived.

Most restless of all were the Macintoshes, as has been said ; and at length they began to sway forward in their excitement, and their pipers suddenly, without orders, blowing the charge, with a rush and a wild yell, the clan sprang forward. Then the whole of their comrades of the right wing took fire and followed, Lord George at their head. In the face of a blinding shower of snow and sleet they dashed upon the enemy, and, after firing at point-blank range, threw away their muskets and closed with the English foot, claymore in hand. Though received by a well-directed fire of musketry and grape, they were not to be stopped ; for, with their usual impetuosity, they burst upon the opposing line, and broke through its centre and left, capturing two guns and a stand of colours. Hacking, stabbing, and slashing, they now saw the second line of the enemy before them, and madly charged that also, though sadly reduced in numbers.

Meanwhile orders had come from headquarters for the whole of our first line to charge, and now those of the left wing swept forward to support their comrades — all except the Macdonalds. These, hitherto the pride and hope of their Prince, refused to move. In spite of the orders and entreaties of their chiefs they stood stock-still, sulkily hacking at the heather with their claymores.

They saw their gallant comrades break through the first line of the foe ; they saw the desperate conflict in which they were engaged ; they saw them charge the second line—a very wall of steel, with its front rank kneeling, second rank stooping forward, and third rank erect—all with levelled bayonets. They saw them near this wall ; they saw the burst of flame with which they were received ; and then they saw them fall in piles before the deadly fire. Next they saw the broken front line of the enemy regain order and turn upon those who had just broken it ; and thus the clansmen were hopelessly shut in between two fires.

And still the Macdonalds moved not. In vain were the exertions of the chiefs ; in vain was the well-known and never before disregarded charging cry of ‘Claymore!’ raised. They refused to move. All they could be induced to do was to fire a feeble volley. Then, seeing the enemy begin to assume the offensive and advance, so far from charging, they commenced, slowly and sullenly, to give ground.

Then it was that the gallant Keppoch, Alexander Macdonald, retrieved *his* name, at least, from the stain which fell that day upon the honour of the Clan Colla. Calling upon his clansmen to follow, he rushed forward, claymore in hand, to meet the coming foe. Finding that none followed, he looked



back and saw them giving ground. Then did shame and sorrow overcome him. 'My God!' he cried, with a bursting heart. 'Have the children of my tribe forsaken me?' Deliberately he strode forward to his doom. A musket-ball struck him, and he fell. One man, his nephew, had the grace to go to his assistance and raise him up; and a second time he attempted to advance, but, riddled with musket-balls, he fell to rise no more.

So perished the noble Keppoch—most gallant and loyal of gentlemen, bravest of soldiers, and dearest and most faithful of friends. Even as he fell the advancing foe pressed on and swept over his prostrate form.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### AFTER THE BATTLE.

As I neared the spot from whence the Prince had viewed the fight, to seek further orders, it became more and more clear that the day was hopelessly lost. The Macdonalds were still retreating, but in good order, with pipes playing and colours flying, though a cloud of the enemy's horse hovered on their flank and rear. The French pickets, too, under Stapleton, were kept well in hand, and these gallant Irishmen did good service in checking the enemy's cavalry. But all the rest of our army was beginning to break and retire in disorder, while the Duke's force continued steadily to advance, its cavalry thrown out on either wing, so as to outflank and envelop us if possible.

My worst fears were confirmed as I approached the headquarters group. The Prince, his face as pale as death, was remonstrating with Sullivan and

Sheridan, who were attempting to force him from the field. He ceased resisting just as I rode up, and never shall I forget the look upon his face—the look of unutterable anguish and despair as he looked over his shoulder upon the field of battle, while they hurried him away from the fatal spectacle.

I paused for a moment where he had been posted throughout the engagement. The ground around the spot was literally hidden by the bodies of his guards and their horses. They lay in piles, three or four deep in some places, some groaning in agony, some still in death, but all torn and lacerated by the deadly artillery fire. How he had escaped was a miracle. I watched him for a few moments as he rode slowly and reluctantly off, his gaze still directed backwards. Then I saw Lord Elcho, followed by the remnant of the life-guards, ride up and say something, evidently in anger, for when Sullivan replied, his lordship turned abruptly away, and, without the slightest sign of a salute, rode off and left the group. And after that the Prince passed on, and I saw him no more until long afterwards.

All, then, was over, and we were left to shift for ourselves. My first thought was of George Belliston. He must be saved for the sake of that old man at Netherdyke; for the sake, too, of that sweet girl who loved him. I was about to seek him out when

I became aware of a great and pressing danger, which must be averted if possible.

The enemy's dragoons had only been prevented from falling on our right flank by the high stone park walls which protected us there, and now I saw they had procured the aid of a party of Argyleshire militia (Campbell's), which party was now busily engaged in pulling down the walls, so that the horsemen might pass. At the same time, I saw some of the dragoon officers pointing eagerly in the direction taken by the Prince. Clearly it was their intention to pursue him could they but get through the last of the walls, which was now the only one remaining intact. They must be stopped at all hazards. But how? was the question.

Wildly I looked round, and a gleam of hope came to me as my eye fell upon that fine soldier, Brigadier Stapleton, busily engaged in attempting to rally our people by the side of his own Irishmen. I galloped up to him, and told him what was taking place, and he immediately ordered a Lowland regiment he had succeeded in getting into something like order to follow me and dislodge the Campbells from the wall. This they advanced to do with praiseworthy coolness, considering the state of affairs. Some of the Campbells had clambered over to our side of the wall, to cover their working party. It was this latter I

wished to stop, so, ignoring the covering party, the Lowlanders drove off the others and prevented their working. But, in the meantime, a great many more Campbells had scaled the wall, and joined their comrades on our side of it, until at length our Lowlanders were outnumbered, and like to be driven off.

At this critical moment I heard my name called by a familiar voice, and turning, saw, to my great satisfaction, my cousin George at the head of a half squadron of Kilmarnock's Horse, Jock Corbitt and Hughie Dagg amongst them. As I rode up to them, sword in hand, the men cheered, then, pointing to the Argyleshire men, I gave the order to charge, and, with another cheer, we thundered down upon them. Our charge was so sudden, so unexpected, that before they knew it we were in their midst, cutting and slashing, and riding them through and through. Then clashed sabre against target and claymore and dirk, burst forth fire and leaden hail from musket and pistol. I could see Jock Corbitt on my left, cutting and hacking like the giant he was, a man going down at every stroke. Hughie Dagg and George I could not see, but knew they were well engaged too, for I could hear little Hughie's voice behind me, shouting out his Tyndale war-cry of 'Wor side yet!'

How long the *mêlée* lasted I know not, for we were all drunk with the frenzy of battle, and thought of nothing but how to cut down another foe. All at once I felt poor Cheviot stop short and utter a strange groaning cry, while a tremor passed through him. Then I felt him going down with me, and before I could disengage myself, I was pinned to the earth by a wounded Campbell, who seized me by the throat, and held me with one hand while he prepared to dirk me with the other. I could see his red, scowling face close to mine, as he placed his knee on my chest. I even noted the red cross in his bonnet, which distinguished him from our men of the white cockade. The gleaming dirk was raised to strike, and I gave myself over for a dead man, when I saw the red face turn redder, then purple, and the eyes almost start from their sockets. Then I felt the hand on my throat relax its grip, and, to my wonder, I saw my would-be slayer begin to rise into the air above me. Sick, and gasping for breath, I rose on one knee, and then I saw it was Jack Corbitt who had come to my aid. He had my assailant by the throat, and had lifted him like a child, and laid him face upwards across his saddle-bow. I thought it was his intention to have broken his back, as he could have done with the greatest of ease; but instead he lifted the senseless form and

flung it, neck and crop, over his horse's head into the midst of the struggling Campbells, just as one might pitch a bale of wool out of a woolshed hatchway.

Before I had time to rise to my feet I saw my preserver fling up his arms and sink back in the saddle, and I knew too well what that meant. I must try and help him as he had helped me. With this object I was stepping across a dead horse, when something heavy seemed to strike me with a dull thud, and I knew no more.

When I came to myself, I was lying amidst a pile of dead and wounded. With some difficulty I managed to sit up and prop my back against something behind me. The gray clouds were still sweeping over from the east, the rain still fell heavily, the white mists were creeping over the moors, and over the field, strewn with the figures of prostrate men and horses, the wild birds screamed mournfully. I doubted not that George and Hughie were both stricken down like Jock Corbitt and myself, and that I was left alone. A dreadful feeling of despondency came over me, a longing for death; and yet, strange to say, a moment later I was fearing for my life.

A few hundred yards from where I lay, I observed a group of redcoats, and, feeling the pangs of thirst intolerable, I waved my hand to attract their atten-

tion. One of them came leisurely towards me, and just then a wounded man who lay between us, not ten paces from me, commenced to writhe and fling his arms about. What was my horror to see the soldier stride up to him and deliberately despatch him with his bayonet. I lay still as death, for now I understood what was going on over there, where the main fight had been. I had noticed soldiers moving about the field as if they were aiding the wounded, only I could not understand why there were so many reports of fire-arms. Now the horrible truth burst upon me. They were butchering our wounded. Hour after hour I lay and witnessed scenes of brutality and horror which for very shame I forbear to write down.

The afternoon was far spent, and darkness was beginning to fall when I saw three persons approach, evidently searching for someone amongst the slain. One was a little man in a plain gray suit, vastly too large for him, a bob wig and a cocked hat; the others were a young man in livery and a dismounted English dragoon. As they neared me, what was my surprise to hear the voice of Hughie Dagg, and to recognise his face beneath the bob wig and the cocked hat.

‘Guid Gode!’ he cried. ‘It’s puir Jock Corbitt. Here, Robbie, lend a hand.’



I saw them extricate the body of our old friend from amongst a heap of other corpses and draw it to one side. Then Hughie covered it with a plaid he had picked up, and as he rose from doing this I heard him utter an exclamation.

'Dod!' he exclaimed, 'there's *puir* Chivvot. *Puir* falla! he's duin for. Is'e warrant *he'll* no be far off!'

I turned my head, and he saw me and came running and raised me up, but as he did so I fainted away from loss of blood.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### IN EXILE.

WHEN I recovered consciousness I found myself in bed in a little, poorly furnished room, with Hughie Dagg seated by my side. As soon as I was able to listen, he told me the story of my escape from the field of battle, a story of exceeding interest in every detail to me, but which I need only relate here in bare outline.

During the conflict in which I was wounded the dragoons, having succeeded in breaking down the park wall, had come upon the scene, and Hughie thought it was time to see to his own safety. Happening to come upon the body of one of the townspeople of Inverness, who had come out to see the battle and had been cut down, together with many other non-combatants, by the English horse, my ingenious friend had assumed the poor baillie's clothing. Then, with his usual luck (he seemed to find friends everywhere), he had fallen in with a

cousin of his who was groom to Sir William Middleton, and in attendance on his master, who was in the English camp. The groom had, at Hughie's instigation, got leave from his master to search for a brother of his who might be amongst the wounded, so he said, and a dragoon was told off to help and escort him, he taking care to select a crony of his own for this service. Under cover of the darkness they had conveyed me safely to the cottage where I now lay, in the town of Nairn, and next morning Hughie had returned to the field, and had seen to the burial of the bodies of Jock Corbitt and Cheviot.

'Yes,' said Hughie, 'puir auld Jock lies where he'd like best to lie, under the heather ; and Chivvot's no fur awa'.'

'But what about my cousin George?' I asked eagerly.

'Oh, he's a' right. He's a Frenchman noo, ye ken. The Duke has put the French-Irishmen on their parole as prisoners o' war, though he's murdered a' the rest he could catch, and Captain O'Brien has dressed the young Squire in yen o' their uniforms, and passed him off for a Frenchy.'

I heaved a sigh of relief, and Hughie bade me cease talking and go to sleep. And there I lay for several days, receiving the greatest kindness from the people of the cottage, although they probably

had a shrewd guess as to who I was, and might have secured a reward for giving me up. At length, when I was almost recovered, Hughie came to me with a grin on his face and a piece of blue paper in his hand.

'What think ye o' that?' he asked, handing me the paper.

It was a safe conduct, signed by the Duke of Cumberland, dated from headquarters at Inverness, and filled in with the names of Robert Dodd, servant to Sir William Middleton, Bart., and Cuthbert Dodd, brother to the said Robert Dodd, who were going on their lawful business to Newcastle. As I read, my face expressed my astonishment.

'Ye see, it's this way,' said Hughie. 'Robbie gat his maister to beg this o' the Duke. He's a decent lad is Robbie, and no abune tellin' a lee to oblige a friend. Ye're to be Robert Dodd, and I'se to be Cuddy Dodd. Noo, d'ye understand?'

Of course I saw it in a moment, and that very day Robert and Cuthbert Dodd set out, and arrived without mishap at Aberdeen. Here, by another stroke of luck, Hughie fell in with another of his many friends, none other than his distant relative, Tim Whinney, master of the good ship *Blagdon* of Newcastle, which had just finished discharging Government stores. We embarked and set sail,

and a little persuasion on Hughie's part and a bill of exchange drawn by me upon Mr. Hodgson, induced the worthy master to carry us to Dunkirk instead of Newcastle. The *Blagdon* being well known to the English cruisers, we were not interfered with, and landed safely at our destination, whence we set out for Paris.

My first care was to write to Mr. Hodgson, enclosing a note for Miss Belliston, telling of our whereabouts and condition, and also of George's being with the French prisoners. I must confess I was not at all comfortable about him, for should he be recognised as an impostor his doom was sealed. When I heard that the French prisoners had been sent on to Newcastle my fears increased, for George was well known to many in that town, of course.

After we had been for some little time in the French capital, we began to meet with many of our friends of the army who, like ourselves, had escaped from Scotland. By them we were informed that the Prince was in hiding in the Highlands, with a price set on his head, though they had strong hopes that he might soon be able to get off. But it was not until July that we heard any tidings of George Belliston.

One day, about the latter end of that month, I came upon Lord Elcho, who was standing in the

street talking to a gentleman I had not seen since the day of Culloden. He was an officer in Fitzjames's Horse, and as I came up he turned to me eagerly and shook hands.

'You will be glad to hear, Mr. Falconar,' said he, 'that your friend Belliston is in France, and will be in Paris to-morrow. He and O'Brien and myself came to the conclusion that, as his identity would most surely be discovered if he went to Newcastle, he had better take to the hills and endeavour to get on board some vessel which would take him off. I was exchanged, and on arriving at Roscoff I found him there. He is to call on me to-morrow, and if you give me your address I will hand it to him.'

I cannot express the joy this news afforded me. I thanked the officer over and over again before I left him; but there was something awaiting me at our lodging which mingled my joy with a great sadness. This was a letter from Miss Belliston, announcing the death of her brother.

So, when at length George appeared, looking very haggard and thin and ill, the mere shadow of his dear old self, our meeting was not so merry after all. Privation and hardship, added to the effects of a wound received at Culloden, had sadly reduced my poor cousin's strength, and now the sad news of his father's death, coming thus suddenly upon him,

flocked to see him. It was a brave show. Clad in rose-coloured velvet, embroidered with silver, his breast sparkling with the diamond-studded Orders of St. George and St. Andrew, the young adventurer rode in a carriage with old Lochiel and Lord Lewis Gordon. Behind were Gordon of Glenbucket and other adherents who had happily escaped with their lives, the cavalcade being escorted by a guard of honour, every man of which was a nobleman or gentleman of rank, under the command of young Lochiel. Loudly cheered the people as the procession passed on; the Prince bowed and smiled upon them. It was a joyous day.

Yet many sad and joyless days were in store for us. The New Year came, and still we were in exile, longing for England and home, yet not daring to venture. The fate of those of our friends who had been taken warned us against that. The executions had been on a wholesale scale; of those who escaped the hangman, hundreds had been sent as slaves to the plantations. Amongst others, the head of our own gallant leader, Lord Kilmarnock, had fallen on the scaffold.

With the passage of time, however, and as their position became more secure, King George and his Government began to relax their severity; and in April, twelve months after our arrival in France, our

friends at home became less discouraging in their replies to our inquiries about coming to England; but it was not until the end of May that we made up our minds to venture.

The day before our departure we called at the Castle of St. Antoine to take leave of the Prince. His face was sad as he bid us farewell.

‘Happy are you,’ said he. ‘Happy to be going *home* once more. When shall it be, I wonder—when will the time come when I also shall be at home, home in England? In my royal father’s name, and in my own, I thank you both for your gallant and loyal services. God bless you both! Accept from me these two rings, and keep them for my sake; and when you are at home and happy, do not forget at times to pray for the exile you leave behind.’

We bowed and retired, and one of us, at least, saw him no more.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### OF OUR RECEPTION BY JAMES FARNABY.

'WE shall learn all about that when we get to Newcastle,' said George Belliston, in answer to a remark of mine, as we were entering the mouth of the Tyne.

'Newcastle! Surely you would never dream of going there!' I cried.

'I must go, for I wrote promising to do so before we left Paris. I could never think of breaking my promise. But of course there is no need for you to go.'

I knew from the way he spoke that it was Kate Farnaby he had written to, though he had never before mentioned the letter. I saw, too, that he was determined, and that it was of no use trying to persuade him to change his mind.

'If you go I go too,' I said, and in spite of all his arguments about its increasing the danger of arrest, I stuck firmly to my point, and the end of it was that both of us, together with Hughie Dagg, accom-

panied the captain of the ship, and were landed at Newcastle quay.

'Good God!' cried Mr. Hodgson when he saw us, 'what on earth brings you here? Did I not tell you that if you came over you might not be molested if you kept quietly out of public view? and here you are making a parade of yourselves in a place like Newcastle, where you are all known. It's a tempting of Providence, and I strongly blame you, Gilbert Falconar, for so wilfully disregarding my strict injunctions.'

'Do not blame Gilbert,' said George. 'I am the guilty party, if guilt there be in wishing to see one's friends. You see, Mr. Hodgson, I must see my—my aunt.'

He blushed as he said this, and I think Mr. Hodgson suspected the truth, for, for the first time since our appearance, he slightly smiled. Next moment he was very grave again.

'My advice to you all,' said he, 'is to get away out of the town at once, and make for North Tyne. You had better go to the Bower. The old Squire is home again; they released him as soon as the news of Culloden arrived. And I would not go near Netherdyke if I were you; better keep away from Simon for the present. I think your aunt, George, much as she would like to see you, would

prefer hearing you were safely out of Newcastle to even that pleasure.'

But George was obstinate; he would call at Mr. Farnaby's that evening. Mr. Hodgson suggested as the better course that we should remain where we were, and that Miss Belliston should be sent for, and appeared to be very much astonished that this course did not seem to satisfy the anxious nephew. My suggestion that Mr. Thurston should be sent for and asked to give his advice was accepted as an alternative and acted upon.

How that long, solemn, plain-looking face lighted up, so that it looked better than merely beautiful—to me, at least—as he entered the little back room and saw who it was that had sent for him! How it, with its kindly eyes, now aglow with pleasure, called back memories of Netherdyke and the old happy days! He was not sure how James Farnaby might take our coming to his house. Perhaps it would be better if he sounded him on the subject first. We all thought it would be better to do that, and our old friend went off on his mission, promising to come back and let us know the result as soon as possible.

George was on tenter-hooks, I could see, and began to think Mr. Thurston would never return; but he reappeared, in what I considered a very

short time, with a very strange expression on his face—a look as if he bore within him some mysterious secret, and did not wish to look as if it were so. Dear old man! he was about the last person in the world to be entrusted with such things.

‘Mr. Farnaby is very angry that you have come to Newcastle—very angry indeed,’ announced our ambassador; ‘but Mrs. Farnaby has talked him over, and, since you are so eager to see your aunt, George, you are to call, but not until it is getting dark, and Gilbert is to go with you, for I dare say he is almost as anxious as you to see Miss Belliston.’

There was almost a twinkle of humour in those melancholy eyes of his as he said that.

‘Yes,’ I cried; ‘you are right, Mr. Thurston, or very nearly so, for I am quite as anxious as George to see Miss Belliston—perhaps more so, though he protests so much.’

George gave me a reproachful look, for he thought I was trying to betray his secret—as if Mr. Thurston did not know it, or have a very shrewd guess about it, already.

We had rather a long wait, for the sun did not set until eight o’clock, and the after-glow lingered cruelly long in the sky, so George thought; but at length Mr. Thurston considered it dark enough to

venture out, and we plunged into the gloaming, Hughie Dagg, on Mr. Thurston's suggestion, going to the White Hart to arrange about horses and wait for us.

Miss Belliston and her sister, both in deep mourning for their brother, received us, and when they saw the only son of that brother standing before them in mourning too, his face still pale from his recent illness, their hearts went out to him. He had come back to them from the midst of dangers and perils, from exile in a foreign land, and, inarticulate with emotion, tears in her voice as in her eyes, his Aunt Belliston threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed upon his breast. I had turned away, and was looking out of the window into the gathering darkness of the street, when I felt myself seized next by the same motherly arms—the only motherly arms I had ever known to remember—and heard myself being blessed and praised for having so faithfully stuck by her boy, for having brought him back at last safe and sound—yes, safe and sound, thank God for it!

And now I saw George's eyes wandering inquiringly about the room, and Mrs. Farnaby regarding him with keen interest, a sort of smile on her face. She knew as well as I did who he missed, but would have us tell her of all we had seen abroad and all we

had gone through. His look was pitiable, poor fellow! but Mrs. Farnaby seemed to have no pity, but kept talking and asking questions until he looked as if he would soon go frantic. At last she capped everything by coolly proposing that we should take leave and go off to the White Hart and depart for North Tyne early next morning.

'The fact is,' said she, 'James is very anxious about you, and this is his advice. Don't think, my dear boys, that we are anxious to get rid of you. It is only on account of the danger you run as long as you remain in Newcastle.'

George's face was now perfectly ghastly. He strove to speak, but seemed unable to get out a word. I came to his relief.

'We should like to see our cousin Kate before we go,' I said simply. 'At any rate *I* should. What do *you* say, George?'

He gave me a grateful look, and muttered that 'Oh yes, he would like to very much,' or something to that effect. His Aunt Farnaby eyed him for some time, a look of amusement in her eyes. Then she whispered something in his ear which made his face radiant, as he followed her from the room. A few minutes later they returned, and Kate came with them, her face beaming with joy, and looking, I thought, more beautiful than ever.

We were all talking together when Mr. Farnaby and Mr. Thurston came into the room. The merchant astonished us very much by his way of greeting his nephew and myself.

‘Well, young gentlemen,’ said he in a cold, severe voice; ‘I am very sorry to see you. I suppose you know the danger you run in coming back? As for you, Mr. Falconar, I have little or no right to interfere with or say anything about your movements. But with you, nephew, it is different. What has brought you back? Where do you intend going? How do you intend to live?’

I saw George’s lip quiver for a moment, so unpreparedly was he taken, but before his uncle had ceased speaking he had recovered himself; his mouth set hard, his face flushed, and he drew himself up to his full height. As for Kate, she looked horror-stricken, her mother rather puzzled, and Miss Belliston both puzzled and angry. Mr. Thurston was the only one of us who seemed neither surprised, shocked nor angry, but doubtless he was prepared for what had occurred.

‘As to your first question, sir,’ answered George, ‘I have come back because I am advised by friends who know that it is now safe to do so if we act with prudence and caution.’

‘Prudence and caution!’ cried Mr. Farnaby.

'And you call it prudence and caution to come to a town like Newcastle, where you are more liable to recognition and arrest than anywhere else! Take my advice and get out of the country again as quickly as you can. Lose not a moment.'

'But we are going to Netherdyke.'

'What! To crave your Uncle Simon's hospitality! Are you sure you will be welcome?'

Poor George flushed up again, and there was a slight tremor in his voice when next he spoke.

'Surely I will be welcome to my own house,' said he. 'For, now that my father is gone, Netherdyke is mine.'

'Undeceive yourself about that,' said Mr. Farnaby coldly. 'You have lost it through your own folly and wickedness. You had better realize your true position. In the eyes of the world you are a rebel against your lawful King; you have no claim on anything in England, neither property nor even liberty. Your very life is forfeit. And such being the case, how dare you intrude yourself into the house of honest, loyal people?'

'James!' cried his wife.

'James Farnaby!' cried Miss Belliston.

'Father!' cried Kate.

As for Mr. Thurston, he neither moved nor spoke.

'Very well, sir,' said George coldly, with a bow;



'I understand you. Good-bye, aunt. Good-bye, Aunt Eleanor. Good-bye, Kate. Good-bye, Mr. Thurston, Come, Gilbert, let us be going.'

Kate was standing like a figure of stone when he had said good-bye to her. Now, with a cry of bitter anguish, she sprang after him as he made for the door. She flung her arms around him.

'Not like that, George—dear George!' she cried. 'You must not go away like that. He does not mean what he says. Father, say you were only in jest. You did not mean what you said?'

'Every word of it,' said her father. 'Let him go, and never let me nor mine look upon his face again as long as he is in his present condition,'

By this time I had taken my leave of all. As I reached the door I heard Kate say in a low voice :

'No, George, it will cause no change in me. Nothing could do that.'

And as we took our way to the White Hart George did not, after all, look so downcast as might have been expected.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### TYNEDALE ONCE MORE.

BEAUTIFUL I had always considered our brawling, brown North Tyne to be—and to me it will always remain the most beautiful of all rivers—but never had its aspect seemed to me so sweet as on that bright June day, when, after our wanderings and our long exile, it lay once more before our homesick eyes. What were the sluggish rivers of the South—even the lordly Thames and gently flowing Seine—compared with our swift-rushing, foaming, impetuous northern stream? And then its valley; the scenes which hemmed it in; the swelling hills, with the cloud shadows chasing each other over their sides; the dark clumps of woodland here and there; the green haughs by the water-side; the gray and rugged crags. The lark sang on high, the trout leaped, the river sang its old melodious song, so grateful to our ear. The very air seemed full of old memories; the scent of the peat-reek came like a benediction. But,

mingled with all our joy on again beholding the old familiar scene was the haunting feeling of insecurity. At any moment we might be snatched away from all this: a word from some malignant witness of our presence might do it. The thought was enough to chill.

But as we rode up the valley, no sign of such malignity did we see. On the contrary, our greeting by old and young, by rich and poor, was hearty to the extreme. This even when we were remote from home, and amongst mere acquaintances. But when we reached our own neighbourhood the demonstrations of welcome became almost embarrassing. From farm-house and cottage poured forth the inmates as we passed, old friends and neighbours, all of them, and all eager to give us kindly welcome.

At length we came in sight of Netherdyke. There, in the distance, amidst its embowering trees, stood the old house, the dear, the often longed for. And yet, alas! though it lay within our sight, to it we were not to go—just then, at least. Knowing Mr. Hodgson's sagacity, and his deep knowledge of all affairs connected with the Belliston family, we concluded to follow his advice. There was no one there, after all, we cared to see. When we had pictured the old place in our minds when far away, we had seen it peopled with forms we loved—the kind old

Squire and his sister, with their faithful old friend. None of these were here now, we owned to one another with a sigh. And, nevertheless, we heaved another sigh of longing as we turned our eyes away. Below us lay the mill. We could visit that, at least.

It is generally by change, and not the absence of it, that we are apt to be startled. But now it was otherwise—with me at least. There stood the old mill, its moss-grown wheel slowly turning and splashing, its machinery within rumbling away as if it had never stopped since we last saw it. There, too, leaning over the half door was the white, dusty figure of old Nichol Wetherby, the miller, as if he had never moved. The flour-dust upon his clothes, his hat, his face, and his shaggy white eyebrows might have been the same as we had noticed there when we left home. Yes, the absence of change was startling, and for a moment made me think that all the past two years had been but a troubled dream. Strange, too, was the thought that during all the tumults and struggles of that time, with the fate of three kingdoms trembling in the balance, the old wheels had kept on steadily turning round, the mill-stones rumbling on, and old Nichol calmly feeding them through the hopper.

God bless his dusty old face! what a welcome

sight it was to us that day, and how it brightened up when he saw us! Then out came his wife and Mabel and Dick, and the very pigs beside the mill-race seemed to know us, and looked up from their rooting with their little cunning eyes, as if to let us see so. I noticed as we rode off that Hughie Dagg had lingered behind, and that neither he nor Mabel was to be seen as we looked back, from which I drew my own conclusions, as did George. And if the welcome had been warm we had so far received, what was it to that which met us at the Bower? The stout old Squire came running out when he heard we were there, and nearly pulled us out of the saddle in the exuberance of his joy, as he wrung our hands.

‘Eh, my lads!’ he cried. ‘But the sight of you’s good for sair een. What said your Uncle Simon when he saw you? What! not seen him! Well, you’ve done right to come first to Uncle Bow-wow; and you’re both right welcome to the Bower, and shall bide as long as you will, but no longer than I can help.’

Here he turned aside, and seemed to be laughing to himself; and sadly were we puzzled by this behaviour and the seemingly inhospitable tenor of his last words. When we were in the house I gave him a letter entrusted to me by Mr. Hodgson, and

while he read it we saw him again laughing softly to himself, as though it contained some huge joke. We were both glad to find the old gentleman in such good spirits, and evidently so well pleased with himself, though we did not understand why until afterwards. Neither did we understand why, when the subject of Netherdyke and Simon Belliston came on the carpet, that, so far from seeming indignant at the position of affairs, he only smiled and laughed again to himself. There was nothing laughable, as far as I could see, in my cousin being kept out of his inheritance; but he volunteered no explanation, and so there was nothing for it but to wait and see if time would clear up the mystery.

Very merry was our host all through dinner, and when it was over he turned to George.

'You young rascal!' said he. 'I think you are behaving very badly to your worthy uncle, not to call and see him after being so long away. I hear he has been very anxious about your safety, and doubtless he'll be glad beyond measure to see you back again safe and sound. It is only your duty to go and see him. And go you shall this very day, and I'll go with you; for I would not miss the sight of his face when he sees you for something. I like to see people made happy by a pleasant surprise.'

George demurred, saying he had no wish to meet

his uncle at present, and told what Mr. Hodgson had said about going; but our old friend was resolute that we all should go, and go we did.

It may be imagined with what mingled feelings we rode into the stable-yard, and heard the vociferous welcome from the kennels as we passed; and what sad and tender memories were called up by all we saw. There was little Bingo, the late Squire's favourite terrier, which did not come bounding up to us and frisking as he used to do, but came creeping and fawning and looking up to us with wistful, pleading eyes, as if asking us why we had not brought his master with us. I saw tears in poor George's eyes as he stooped to pat the little creature's head. Then, in the hall, there still hung the old Squire's whips and guns, and on the antlers there still hung the hat he had last worn. When we entered the oak parlour there was not an article but what spoke eloquently of the departed master of the house. Most eloquently of all his elbow-chair, standing in its accustomed place, but in place of the accustomed form which used to fill it sat another—that of the man who had usurped it, his brother Simon.

He rose as we entered. The Squire of the Bower was first.

'Halloa, Simon!' said he, without offering to shake hands. 'I've brought someone to see you.'

The stout old man was right. It *was* worth something to see Simon's face when his eyes fell upon his nephew. He was evidently taken by surprise, for he started as if he had been shot, and stood without a word.

'Ha, ha!' laughed Bowrie. 'I told you, George, your uncle would be main pleased to see you. Doesn't he look it?'

The sarcasm recalled Simon to himself, and his old crafty smile came over his face.

'Of course I'm pleased to see you, George,' said he. 'But at the same time I am alarmed. That was what caused me such a shock when I saw you. Is it not very imprudent of you to come here?'

'Where should he come to if not to his own house?' asked the old Squire.

Simon started, and his face fell again. Bowrie laughed.

'Well, well, George, my boy,' said he. 'As your uncle thinks it imprudent of you to be here, doubtless he has some good reason which we know not of, so I think we had better be going.'

'With all my heart,' agreed George. 'You know I never wanted to come.'

'No, no!' cried Simon. 'You are surely not going away like that, nephew? Why should you leave your—own house?'



'Because you think it imprudent of him to be here,' answered Bowrie.

'I said it was imprudent of him to come back, but since he is here he may as well stay. Come, George, don't go away. I will order your room to be got ready for you.'

He spoke eagerly, as if really anxious that his nephew should stay, and I have now no doubt that he was. But George thanked him, and elected to leave with us.

'He's not so bad after all,' said the generous-hearted fellow as we were riding back.

Bowrie made no response to this, only commenced another of his inward laughs. Then suddenly his face became serious as he turned his head, attracted by a sound behind us.

'Look there!' said he.

We looked, and saw a horseman come through the gates of Netherdyke, and ride swiftly down the road towards the South.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### HUGHIE DAGG IN A NEW CHARACTER.

'HE's a stout and trusty little body, and I wish you would send him to me, Gil. I have a message to send, and he's the very man for the job.'

So the old Squire shortly after our return to the Bower. We had been talking of Hughie Dagg and his conduct during our absence. I went out to seek him, but was told he had gone off to Netherdyke Mill, saying he had important business to settle with old Nichol Wetherby. I had a pretty good guess what his important business was, but doubted very much about its being with the miller. Loath as I was to interfere with it, I resolved to go to the mill, and tell him the Squire wanted him. Close by the mill I met Dick Wetherby.

'Ye're right there, Mr. Falconar,' said he, laughing, when I had told him what Hughie had said. 'It's not the auld man his business 'll be wi'. If ye ask ma opinion I should say it's mair likely to

be wi' wor Mabel. He'll be tellin' her some o' the stories he was tellin' us this efterneun aboot a' the wonders he's seen and deun when ye were away thegither—sic tales as I nivver heard! I wadden't like to say he tells lees, but thor gey queer tales. Ye'll find him i' the hoose.'

And in the mill-house I found him sure enough, seated in the kitchen in all his glory. The kitchen and general living room of the mill cottage was a long stone-floored room, from the low rafters of which depended hams and sides of bacon and bunches of dried herbs. A huge fireplace filled up the further end of the room, and on a long settle by its side sat the old miller, his day's work over, his bald pate shining in the firelight, and his eyebrows, whiskers, and clothing still white with mill dust. Alongside the dresser the high eight-day clock ticked slowly and deliberately, and over the high mantel-shelf, which was crowded with candlesticks and other objects of glittering polished brass, an old-fashioned fowling-piece hung against the wall. A conspicuous object on the wall opposite the long settle was old Nichol's fiddle, for he was a well-known performer on that instrument, and no mean hand at a reel or a country dance.

Beside the master of the house its mistress sat, and at the opposite side of the fireplace the fair

Mabel, busily knitting. Right between sat Hughie Dagg astride a chair, which he had turned with its back to the fire. His elbows rested on the back of the chair, and he was holding forth in grand style to the old man, one eye meantime on the daughter. In fact, he was playing Othello to Mabel's Desdemona.

'I'll no' tell ye a lee about it, sir,' he was saying. 'but thae toons is queer places. I've seen a vast o' them—London, and Pairis, and Carel, and Faa-kirk, and Inverness, and Newcastle, and lots besides, Noo, for size London bangs them a'—Pairis isna a patch on't, let the Frenchies say what they will. But then, ye see, London's a fair ridiculous place. Ye might gan fra Mayday till Martinmas, and nivver come to the end on't. Thors some sense about Newcastle noo. If ye want to be oot on't ye have just to start walkin' or ridin', and there ye are in a crack. And the best thing, it seems to me, when ye're in a toon, is to get oot on't as sharp's ye can. Hoo the folk manages to leeve i' them I nivver could mak' oot. Noo, if ye want a place—a place to leeve and dee in, a place where ye can get a waugh o' caller, fresh air when ye want it—Farneycleugh for me! It licks them a'. As for London and Pairis, what wi' the smell o' fush and things, and the closeness o' the hooses, they're enough to smoor ony-

body; but here's Mr. Falconar, and he'll tell ye the same.'

I was quite ready to corroborate his remarks, both as to the unwholesomeness of town life and the superior advantages in every way of Farneycleugh as a residential place, and while I was so doing the conscious Mabel blushed, and hung her head in confusion. Then I told Hughie how he was wanted at the Bower.

'I'se be wi' ye in a minute,' said he; 'but afore we gan maybes Nichol 'll gie us a tune on his fiddle.'

'Nee, nee,' said the old man, solemnly shaking his head. 'She was a present fra the Squire, and not a bow shall be drawn across her i' this house, and him scarce six months in his grave, pur man !'

Hughie begged of me to go first, and he would follow and overtake me. Happening to look back, I saw two figures in the moonlight come from the cottage towards the garden gate. These, I made no doubt, were our love-stricken swain and the fair Mabel, and I have no doubt either that he was still engaged in singing the praises of Farneycleugh as a place of residence to the disadvantage of the rest of the habitable globe. I had nearly reached the Bower before he overtook me.

I did not see him again for two days after that

night, for it turned out that the message he was to take was for Mr. Hodgson at Newcastle. I happened to be in the stable yard when our little friend returned.

‘Wha think ye I saw ye noo aside Netherdyke Mains?’ cried he, in great excitement. ‘Ye’ll mind yon drukken blackgaird squire at Hexham, him as flyted at Mrs. Cook? Weel, he’s on his way to Netherdyke, and yon squint-eyed trash, Lant, ahint him.’

I told the old Squire about this, and about the episode at the Phoenix. He looked grave.

‘Simon’s up to some dog’s trick,’ said he. ‘But never mind; we’ll fettle him.’

Then he opened a letter which Hughie had brought, and it seemed to contain something even more amusing than the last, for he laughed to himself till I thought he would have done himself an injury, then had another look at the letter, and started to laugh again.

Next morning, when we came down to breakfast, we found our host already there, and—an unusual thing for him, whose favourite text was ‘ease before elegance’—most carefully dressed in a handsome new gold-laced coat, a richly-embroidered waistcoat, and a powdered wig. He was, moreover, booted and spurred and ready for the road.

'Now then,' he cried when we had finished breakfast, 'off with you both and prepare to ride. We must to Bellingham without loss of time, for we have friends to meet there. Make haste!'

Wondering greatly to ourselves what might be in the wind, we obeyed, and soon the three of us, with Hughie Dagg and one of the Bower servants, were on the road to Bellingham.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

WE MEET WITH A SURPRISE—AND SO DOES SIMON.

WE met with a surprise—at least, George and I did—when we reached Bellingham, for there, waiting for us at the Fox and Hounds, were both Mr. Hodgson and Mr. Thurston. They were closeted with the Squire of the Bower for some considerable time in a private room upstairs, and then we were sent for to join them. I felt sure that something extraordinary was in the wind, but they said nothing to enlighten us; and the old Squire seemed more pleased with himself than ever, and scarce able to contain his excitement. He paced up and down the floor, turning first to Mr. Thurston and then to Mr. Hodgson and winking at them in turn, then almost shaking himself in pieces with suppressed laughter.

All this, as may well be supposed, filled us with wonder and curiosity; nor were these feelings decreased when the landlord came up to say that



Mr. Simon Belliston of Netherdyke was at the door, and would like to speak with his nephew.

‘Mr. Simon Belliston of Netherdyke, forsooth!’ roared Bowrie. ‘I’ll Netherdyke him!’

And with that he flung open the casement, and we saw Simon on horseback below, surrounded by a gaping group of children and some of the people of the town, while others were hastening to the scene of what promised to be a little unwonted excitement.

‘Well, Mr. Belliston, and what may you want?’ cried the old Squire.

‘I wish to have speech with my nephew, in private.’

‘That’s as he may decide,’ said Bowrie. ‘Here, George, your uncle wants you to go down to him, but if you take my advice you’ll stop where you are and let him speak.’

George went to the window.

‘You may tell me what you have to say openly and before all. There are none here except friends,’ said he.

‘But these,’ remonstrated Simon, indicating the crowd. ‘It is a private matter.’

‘They are my friends, too,’ said George; and there was a murmur of assent from the people, to whom we were all well known.

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'Aye, that we are!' was the general cry.

So far, Simon had worn an air of serious and deep concern, but now he could not refrain from a smile of satisfaction. Evidently it suited his purpose, after all, that the matter he had come about should be made public, and I began to fear George had done wrong in refusing to go down.

'Very well, my dear nephew,' began Simon; 'have your own way. It grieves me sorely to be the bearer of such tidings as I bring. I have come to warn you for your good, so that you may escape while yet there is time. I know I shall be blamed—perhaps punished—but blood is thicker than water, and I could not help coming to tell you of your danger. Know, then, that an information has been sworn against you and your companions in rebellion, and a warrant is out for your arrest. Fortunately, the magistrate who signed the warrant is a friend of mine, and thus I have been enabled to get ahead of the officers to give you warning. They came to Netherdyke this morning, and from thence to the Bower, where they learned you had come here. Fly while you may, I beseech you. To horse, I say, before they come!'

There was a murmur of sympathy from the crowd. The sympathy of the people was with the threatened parties, and also extended to the relative who had

come so opportunely to warn them. His story was so plausible, and his avowal of natural affection appealed strongly to their feelings. But there was soon to be a change.

George turned, as if to follow his uncle's advice, and make off at once, calling on us to follow, but Bowrie stopped him.

'Stay where you are,' said the stout-hearted old man—'stay, all of you, and leave me to deal with him and his warning.'

Then he leaned forward, with his head out of the window, and his sonorous voice rang out so that all could hear.

'Simon Belliston,' cried he, 'you cannot deceive me; I know you too well. Who swore the information? tell me that. You know as well as I do that it was yourself, or someone set on by yourself. You have seized your nephew's patrimony, his house, his lands, and now would have him taken, or forced to fly abroad for fear of being taken—either would suit you—to make your seat secure. And now you think to throw dust in the eyes of the public and cloak your treachery by coming here with your cursed hypocritical rant, and your blood thicker than water, and your wish to save him, and the rest. But we are not to be deceived. Your nephew is not to be frightened into flying, to leave you in possession of

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his rights. Here he stands, with friends—and staunch friends too—around him, and shall not budge.'

'I see what it is,' cried Simon; 'you think I have come with a false alarm, but you will soon find out your mistake. Look, there come the officers!'

He pointed as he spoke to a party of horsemen which was entering the town.

'Now do you believe me?' he continued, with a triumphant smile and a chuckle. 'There is still time. You had better be off, the three of you.'

'No!' thundered Bowrie. 'If the warrant is in order they will submit to the law and yield quietly. Let your officers come on.'

There was a loud murmur now from the crowd, and many threatening motions, as the horsemen, who were headed by the red-faced Hexham magistrate, rode up and ranged themselves alongside Simon. Hughie Dagg uttered an exclamation of rage as he recognised amongst the officers the face of his old enemy Lant. Then, on a few whispered words from Bowrie, Mr. Hodgson called on someone down the stairs, and two strange men entered the room—strange men, as I thought; but, as it turned out, I was wrong, for on seeing them, Hughie Dagg nudged me.

'Do ye no ken them?' he whispered. 'They're

the twa that carried off Simon yon mornin' instead o' the ould Squire. This bangs a'!

The two new-comers, after a whispered consultation with Mr. Hodgson, Bowrie and Mr. Thurston left the room, and presently I saw them outside, making their way through the crowd in the direction of the churchyard gate. By this time the officers from Hexham had dismounted and were about to enter the house.

'Come on, you three prisoners,' said Bowrie, with a sly, good-humoured twinkle in his eye; 'come and give yourselves up, you young rebels!'

There was nothing for it but to follow him, and never did I see a man so taken aback as was Simon when he saw Mr. Hodgson and Mr. Thurston appear behind us. His triumphant smile gave way to an unquiet look, as though he suspected something not altogether pleasant was going to happen.

'Here are the young men,' said Bowrie to the red-faced magistrate, whose eyes looked watery and swollen as if he had indulged in a cup too many overnight. 'They are quite ready to go with you provided the warrant is in order. As in some sort their guardian, may I be allowed to look at it?'

One of the officers produced the document and held it so that the old gentleman could read it.

'Yes,' said Bowrie, 'it seems to be in order.'

A groan went up from the crowd, and it commenced to close in on the officers and Simon with threatening gestures and loud execrations.

'Quiet, my friends,' cried Bowrie. 'Leave this to me.'

Then he turned to the magistrate, who seemed very much frightened.

'As for you, my friend,' he said, 'I fear you are a day behind the fair. Come over to the church and I will show you something.'

The whole concourse—officers, prisoners and all—made for the gate of the churchyard. The two officers from Newcastle had just affixed a paper to the door of the church.

'Bring a copy here,' cried Bowrie.

One of the men held out a folded paper to him, but he shrank back from it as if it had been something poisonous, and motioned Mr. Hodgson to take it.

'Tell them what it is,' said he; 'I care not to touch it.'

Mr. Hodgson unfolded the paper.

'Gentlemen, and good people all,' he said, in a loud voice, 'this is a copy of a royal proclamation, dated three days ago, announcing the passage of an Act of Indemnity, granting a free pardon to all engaged against the Government in the late—ahem

—troubles, except those exempted by name. As the name of none of my young friends appears amongst those exempted from the benefit of the Act, it follows they are pardoned, and the warrant issued against them as rebels is of no effect. They are free to come and go as they list.'

A great huzza from the crowd followed this announcement, and Simon and his friends, with blank looks, slunk off to where some boys were holding their horses. Mr. Hodgson held up his hand, and there was silence again.

'There is something more I have to say,' he cried — 'something of great importance. In the list of persons expressly exempted from the pardon, and therefore still liable to arrest and punishment, appears a name which has special interest to us all—the name of Simon Belliston, brother to John Belliston, late of Netherdyke, in the county of Northumberland, Esquire.'

Here there was another great shout from the people, and all eyes were turned towards the spot where Simon had stood, a minute before, beside his horse. But now he was not there. Followed by the man Lant, his flying figure was seen, tearing from the town.

'There he is—there he is!' cried first one and then another.

'Stole away!' roared Bowrie, in a voice which might have been heard at the other side of Hareshaw Common. 'Quick, Hughie!' he added; 'get out the horses. We must be at Netherdyke before him.'

In a trice our horses were led out, and we were mounted. The red-faced worthy from Hexham had been left behind by his friends, and now wore a very crestfallen air.

'Good day to you, sir!' cried Bowrie, as we passed him. 'Sorry to have spoiled your sport. Better go home and write out another warrant for your friend Simon.'

And with this parting shot we rode off, amidst the cheers of the good people of Bellingham.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE NEW SQUIRE OF NETHERDYKE.

NONE but those who have undergone a similar ordeal can have an idea of the immense feeling of relief we felt now. The dull, heavy feeling of coming evil which lay on our hearts like lead was now completely removed. The fear as of the fear of death which had hung over us was dispelled, and we felt ourselves our own men once more.

The reaction was correspondingly great. Never were three lighter hearts than ours as we rode into Netherdyke stable-yard, once more at home, happy, and free as air, and we were fully well kept in countenance and sympathized with by our companions, the three conspirators who had managed everything so well, so far.

To our relief we learned that Simon had not been seen since he left in the morning, and Mr. Hodgson, business-like as usual, immediately set to work to seal up all the drawers, desks, and cupboards likely

to contain documents and valuables left by the late Squire. This being done, we sat down to enjoy ourselves, and enjoy ourselves we did, you may be sure, the old Squire of the Bower not least, and it was late before we retired to rest.

Next day we had a fresh surprise sprung upon us by the conspirators, for who should arrive but Mrs. Cook, late of the Phoenix, Hexham, with a cartload of pots and pans, and eatables of various kinds! She was now, she told us, keeping the Queen's Head at Morpeth, having been obliged to leave Hexham through the persecution of the 'miscreant hero.' Never was a woman so pleased as she when we told her of that person's discomfiture of yesterday. She had not been long in the house before the kitchen chimney was nearly set on fire by the huge blaze which began to roar up it; cook-maids and scullery-maids were flying hither and thither under her skilful generalship, with the result that a succession of the most grateful and appetizing odours permeated the whole house, and set all our mouths a-watering.

So far there had been neither sign nor news of Simon, and when evening came we had a right royal gathering of friends and neighbours to feast and drink health and happiness to the new Squire of Netherdyke.

But this was nothing to what happened on the succeeding day. The three wily conspirators had for this prepared their great and final surprise. About eleven in the forenoon, after many nods and winks and mysterious whisperings, they disappeared, and the next thing we were aware of was the arrival of a coach to which they formed the escort. We ran out, and were in time to see Mr. Thurston open the door of the coach, and gallantly hand out, first Mrs. Farnaby, next Miss Belliston, and then Kate, who was followed by her father.

It may seem strange that James Farnaby should thus appear amongst the visitors of the young master of Netherdyke, after what had taken place when last they met. But we did not think it so, for Mr. Thurston had explained to us how George's uncle had known of the proposed general pardon, and felt quite certain that in a few days at most his nephew would be one of those to benefit by it. Thus it was with a hidden meaning that he had said, 'Let neither me nor mine look upon his face again, as long as he is in his present condition.' The bitter words he had used had been arranged beforehand with Mr. Thurston to test the state of Kate's affection for her cousin. So to-day there was no coldness between uncle and nephew, but, on the contrary, the utmost good-will.

I am not going to try and describe that happy meeting, in which tears and laughter, sobs and embraces, were all mixed up together, still less the further doings of that day—how the future mistress of Netherdyke was proudly led into the old house by George ; how there was a great banquet—or, rather, two, for the country people all around were entertained in a huge tent in front of the house ; how there were more toasts and good wishes, and much demolition of Mrs. Cook's good cheer ; how, amidst all the rejoicing, there was an under-current of sober respect for the memory of the late Squire. You can imagine all these things, and how the Squire of the Bower and his two fellow-plotters gloried in the success of their scheming, as they saw their young friend, the new Squire, doing the honours of the old place.

But of one thing which occurred that night I must speak more fully, a thing which never entered into the calculations of the plotters, and which surprised them as much as it did other people.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE LONG ROOM AGAIN.

THE last of the guests who were not to stop in the house had departed, everybody had retired to rest, and all was still. There was a fine moonlight, and I sat in my old room and looked out of the window on the quiet scene outside, just as I had done on that night, now nearly two years ago, when I had seen the stranger in the Long Room. The view of the familiar landscape sleeping in the moonlight, the murmur of the river, recalled that night to memory, and I began to think of all that had come and gone since then ; of all the changes which had come about, and of all the strange adventures we had gone through ; the sad fate of so many of our comrades-in-arms, some killed in battle, some still in exile, some perished on the scaffold or in prison, some transported to the plantations—I thought of all these things.

I thought, too, of our old Squire, then alive and

well, now laid low in the churchyard, and of poor Jock Corbitt, once a very tower of strength, now sleeping under the heather of Culloden Moor, with gallant gray Cheviot close beside him. And, as I thought, I could not but wonder what we, the survivors, had done to deserve so different a fate—to be spared as we were to reach this peaceful haven of home.

Then my thoughts drifted into another channel. I thought of the Prince, leader of our once so hopeful enterprise, and how he was probably still in Paris, hoping against hope for aid from the French King, and building up his heart with thoughts of what the future held in store for him. His parting words came to my mind, and a great pity came over my heart as I remembered his gallant bearing, his constant kindness to us, and the bitter disappointment he had met with. I felt a sort of reproach in the remembrance of the feeling of our gladness in leaving, and, as it were, deserting him; of our selfish joy at the prospect of seeing home once more. It was then that I first thought of a resolve which, not long afterwards, I carried out.

Suddenly, while my mind was busied with the past and future, I was recalled to the present by a strangely familiar sound. I had only heard it once or twice before, but I recognised it instantly as the

opening of the door of the priest's chamber in the Long Room. Drawing off my boots, I crept to the door of my room and listened. Someone passed with stealthy tread, and after a few seconds I cautiously opened the door and peeped out.

Again, as on that other night, I saw the figure of a man stealing along towards the staircase; again, as then, I saw the figure appear and disappear as he passed the windows through which the moonlight streamed.

Softly I followed, as before—as before, stole down the stairs, and, as before, saw the visitor make for the door of the oak parlour. A soft radiance from the moonlight pervaded the hall, and I could see him turn the handle of the door. As before, he opened it and entered, only this time there was no one to receive him. He quietly closed the door behind him, and I paused outside, considering what was best to be done.

I thought at first of turning the key in the lock, and so securing the intruder while I alarmed the house. But, then, I did not know who he might be. Supposing, for instance, it turned out to be Mr. Thurston, I might be not only laughed at for my pains, but the means of placing the old gentleman in an awkward position. Whoever the person inside the room might be, presently I heard him

unbarring the window-shutters, and this decided me.

Noiselessly I turned the handle, opened the door, and glided in, holding my breath the while, hoping to see, myself unseen. The window, which opened down to the floor, and gave upon the north garden, was flung wide open, and the moonlight flooded the greater part of the room, but luckily where I stood—near the door—was in deep shadow.

Near the fireplace I could see a man, presumably the one I had followed, who carried a lantern, and by its light seemed to be examining the panelling over the mantel-shelf. The safe, then, was what he was in search of. He could be no stranger robber, else he had not known to go so directly to his object. A suspicion which had struck me at the first grew stronger now, and when he placed the lantern on a cabinet by the side of the fireplace, and the light fell full on his face, this suspicion was confirmed. It was Simon Belliston.

His face was haggard and pale, and I could see that his hand shook as he took a key from his pocket, and inserted it in the keyhole of the hinged panel, and opened it, disclosing the iron door of the safe behind. I heard him give one of his old quiet chuckles as the wax of Mr. Hodgson's seal fell in fragments on the mantel-shelf; then, with another



key, he opened the safe, and commenced to take out the contents. First, he withdrew a leathern bag, and as he placed it on the cabinet beside the lantern I heard the unmistakable chink of coined gold—the money, or part of it, he had received from Mr. Hodgson for transmission to his brother, I thought to myself. First he had misappropriated it, and now he had come, like a thief in the night, to carry it off.

But he had not yet finished. Again he thrust his arm into the safe, and this time brought out several leathern jewel-cases. Deliberately he opened them, one by one, and as he dropped the glittering contents into the money bag, I recognised amongst them heirlooms which had been dearly prized by my dear old friend and relative, the late Squire. There was no mistaking now that the intention of the wretched man was not only to re-steal the money he had stolen once before, and perhaps considered his own, but also to deprive his nephew of the family jewels. I resolved it should not be so if I could prevent it, and braced myself for action.

He was proceeding to tie up the mouth of the bag, after emptying the last of the jewellery into it, when I noiselessly stepped forward, and, reaching over his shoulder, snatched it away. So quietly and suddenly was it done that he was completely

taken by surprise, for he had, of course, been perfectly unconscious, up to that moment, of the presence of anyone except himself in the room. He turned quickly, in a perfect tremor of nervous alarm, but the next moment he recognised me, as the moonlight fell on my face, and his nerve and assurance returned.

‘So it is you!’ he whispered hoarsely. ‘You are once more at your prying, eavesdropping tricks; but you shall not interfere with me with impunity—that you shall find.’

With that he sprang upon me, hoping to secure the bag, and I had just time to thrust it into the deep side-pocket of my coat before he reached me; then, having both hands at liberty, I knew I was more than a match for him in a struggle, and so it proved, for scarce had we grappled than I laid him flat on his back on the floor. As he rose to his feet I saw his hand wander to his breast in search of a pistol, as I doubted not. But I was too quick for him. As good luck would have it, his late brother’s sword hung on the wall close by me.

‘Hands down, or I run you through!’ I cried, as I whipped the blade from its sheath.

He was forced to obey, and stood facing me, panting and scowling. Then suddenly I saw a change come over his face—a look of malicious

triumph came into it—and then I found myself seized from behind and violently dragged to the ground, a knee was placed on my chest, and looking up I saw that my new assailant was the scoundrel Lant. Now that there were two to one I thought I stood small chance of saving the treasure; nevertheless, I resisted to the utmost their combined attempt to rifle my pocket. My sword had been wrested from me by Simon; still, I struck out fiercely with my hands when I had a chance, and was making a fairly good fight of it, considering the odds, when I felt the cold muzzle of a pistol against my forehead. It was Simon who held the weapon.

‘Deliver up quietly what you have got,’ he said, ‘or you are a dead man.’

‘Never!’ I cried, desperately trying to knock up the pistol, and giving myself up for lost. Then, at my last extremity, I heard someone leap into the room through the open window behind me, and my two assailants were dashed backwards from where they knelt over me, Simon’s pistol exploding as he fell, and bringing down a shower of plaster from the ceiling. As I regained my feet I saw—with what joy may be imagined—that Hughie Dagg was by my side, in his hand a pistol, with which he covered Simon.

Lant was the first to move. He crawled to the window and, still covered by Hughie's pistol, Simon followed him. At the window the baffled wretch turned.

'Curse you both!' he cried, shaking his fist. 'You have the better of me for the present, but I will be even with you yet.'

Even as he spoke there was heard a rush of feet in the hall, and George Belliston, followed by the Squire of the Bower, Mr. Thurston, Mr. Hodgson, and some of the servants, burst into the room. There was no time for explanation then, but Hughie told me afterwards how, hearing that Lant had been seen in the vicinity, he suspected some villainy, so resolved to watch. The neighing of a horse in the North Wood had brought him round to that side of the house, and thus so opportunely to my assistance.

Lant had, by the time our friends appeared, made off, and Simon followed his example as soon as he saw George and his company.

In a few moments we heard the sound of galloping horses in the direction of the North Wood, and Netherdyke saw Simon Belliston no more.

## CHAPTER XL.

### AND LAST.

I WAS present at the wedding of my Cousin George and Kate Farnaby, which took place at the little church of St. Cuthbert at Bellingham, and soon afterwards—in fact, as soon as I had disposed of my little property at Alnmouth—I carried into execution the resolve I had made, and to which I have before referred. This was to rejoin the Prince, and make him an offer of my services. I will only say that this offer was graciously accepted, and though I went through some further stirring adventures I refrain from giving any account of them here. One episode only I will enlarge upon, because it has some connection with Netherdyke, and that is my again meeting with Simon Belliston.

It was at Paris that I fell in with him, one day as I was coming from St. Antoine. He was the last man in the world I expected to see when he accosted me in the street and smilingly held out his hand as

if nothing out of the way had ever taken place between us.

'Excuse me, Mr. Belliston,' said I; 'I have not forgotten, if you have, certain passages in the past, and it would be only a mockery to take your hand in pretended friendship.'

'Tut, tut, man,' said he. 'Why rake up the past? Let bygones be bygones. For my part, I bear no malice.'

His cool assurance fairly took away my breath. He spoke as if he considered himself an injured man, and possibly by that time had worked himself into such a belief. His next words confirmed this.

'I am an unfortunate and an ill-used man, Gilbert,' he went on. 'I am cast off by all my friends; my very relatives give me the cold shoulder, and leave me to starve for all they care.'

'And can you wonder at it?' I asked.

'Well, perhaps some of them have cause for coldness. But their treatment is not what I have most to complain of. The thing which causes me most distress is the ingratitude of one to further whose cause I did that which has forced me to fly my native country, a proscribed man, a wretched, penniless outlaw.'

'And who is that?'

‘Why, who should it be but Charles Edward Stuart, he who sets up to be Prince of Wales?’

‘Nonsense, man!’ I cried. ‘This is mere midsummer madness. Did you not at Newcastle leave our party and publicly espouse the other side?’

‘Yes; but that was after he had rejected my advice. Before that I had a plan for letting him into the town. Like a fool I committed it to paper, and his cursed secretary, Murray, gave it up to the English Government afterwards, and thus effected my ruin. And now when I go to this mock Prince he refuses to see me; when I write him and tell him of the distress to which I am reduced by endeavouring to serve him, he fubs me off with a paltry dole, sent by a lackey. Oh, Gil, this is a wicked and ungrateful world; and well has it been said, “Put not your faith in princes.”’

When he mentioned Mr. Secretary Murray, the remembrance of the night of the supper at Larriston came back to me, and I understood now why Murray had asked me on the stairs about Simon Belliston. His letter, then, was one of those which had not been amongst the papers in the despatch-box destroyed by the Prince.

‘And now,’ continued Simon, ‘I know not what is to become of me. I am in a desperate plight, and want stares me in the face—nay, more, has me in its grip.’

He did, indeed, look as if what he said was true, for not only was his apparel shabby and threadbare, but his face looked pinched and haggard, as from want of food. What could I do under the circumstances? The man had acted wickedly in the past, and what he had just said only made him seem more vile even than before, for had he not admitted double treachery? Yet he was down, he was in want; he was the dear old Squire's brother, George's uncle, and my relative after all. And then again he was a connecting link, even if a vile one, with Netherdyke and the old happy days. I could not behave as I thought of doing when first I met him that day. I could not pass by on the other side and leave him in misery and want.

What I was able to do, however, would not afford him any permanent relief. I wrote to George, telling him of his uncle's plight, though without suggesting anything. But suggestion to the doing of a kindly act was not needed by that noble heart. The generous fellow heaped coals of fire upon the head of the man who had done his best to supplant him, and arranged that a small pension should be regularly paid him by a banker. So, after all, Simon found that what he said at Bellingham about blood being thicker than water was truer than he probably believed at the time.



After I had been abroad some two years, a great longing came over me to see Netherdyke and the North once more, and, finding myself free for a time, I embarekd for England. The first of my old friends I saw was Mr. Hodgson, whom I found in his office on the quayside, quite unchanged and working away as hard as ever. Business, he said, was prospering, and though I had come with the intention of discussing certain political matters with him, I did not find him so enthusiastic on this subject as formerly. The country, he told me, had settled down, and had quite reconciled itself to the new order of things, and there was not the remotest chance of its favouring any change. Next I saw James Farnaby, who was now an Alderman, and his wife, who was very proud of his new dignity, and very happy, though still missing her daughter Kate's companionship at times. Then I set out for Netherdyke, the Mecca of my thoughts.

The old mill was rumbling away as of yore when I passed, and the old miller was there, too, as dusty as ever, with Dick beside him. But there had been changes there, too. Mabel had been married and carried off to Farneycleugh by Hughie Dagg, and her mother had been dead for six months.

It does not need to be told that I received a welcome of the warmest at Netherdyke, where I

found all well, George quite settled down into the quiet country gentleman, his wife as charming as ever, but with an added matronly grace. There was a new arrival, too, in the shape of a son and heir, a fine stout boy, named after his grandfather, the old Squire. Miss Belliston was there, too, kindly and gentle as of old, and Mr. Thurston, happy once more amongst his old ballads and broadsides.

The next day there was a great gathering of friends and neighbours, amongst them, of course, the stout old Squire of the Bower, brimming over with hearty good-fellowship and high spirits.

But, like everything else, my visit at length came to an end, and George and Hughie Dagg set me on my way as far as Hexham. The latter would fain have had me pay a visit to Farneycleugh, as he said, to see 'the wife and the bairn and the new gray colt, the verra image o' poor Chevvot,' but this I had not time to do.

At Hexham I naturally thought of Mrs. Cook of the Phoenix and her red-faced persecutor.

'Oh,' said Hughie, 'she's still at Morpeth, at the Queen's Head, but her "miscreant hero," as she used to call him, killed hissel' wi drinkin not lang syne. Then ye'll mind his creetor, Lant. Weel, he was fair lost after his maistor's deith, and went fra bad to warse, till he was hanged only last week, for sheep-stealin'.'

As long as Mr. Thurston lived I heard frequently from Netherdyke, for he was a capital correspondent, and fond of writing letters; but since he is gone, news from thither has become scarcer.

The last letter I had was in a hand I had not seen before—a large sprawling hand, and ran as follows :

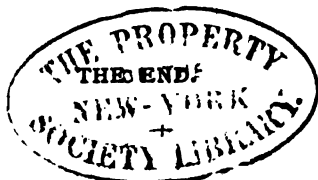
‘MY DEAR UNCLE GILBERT,

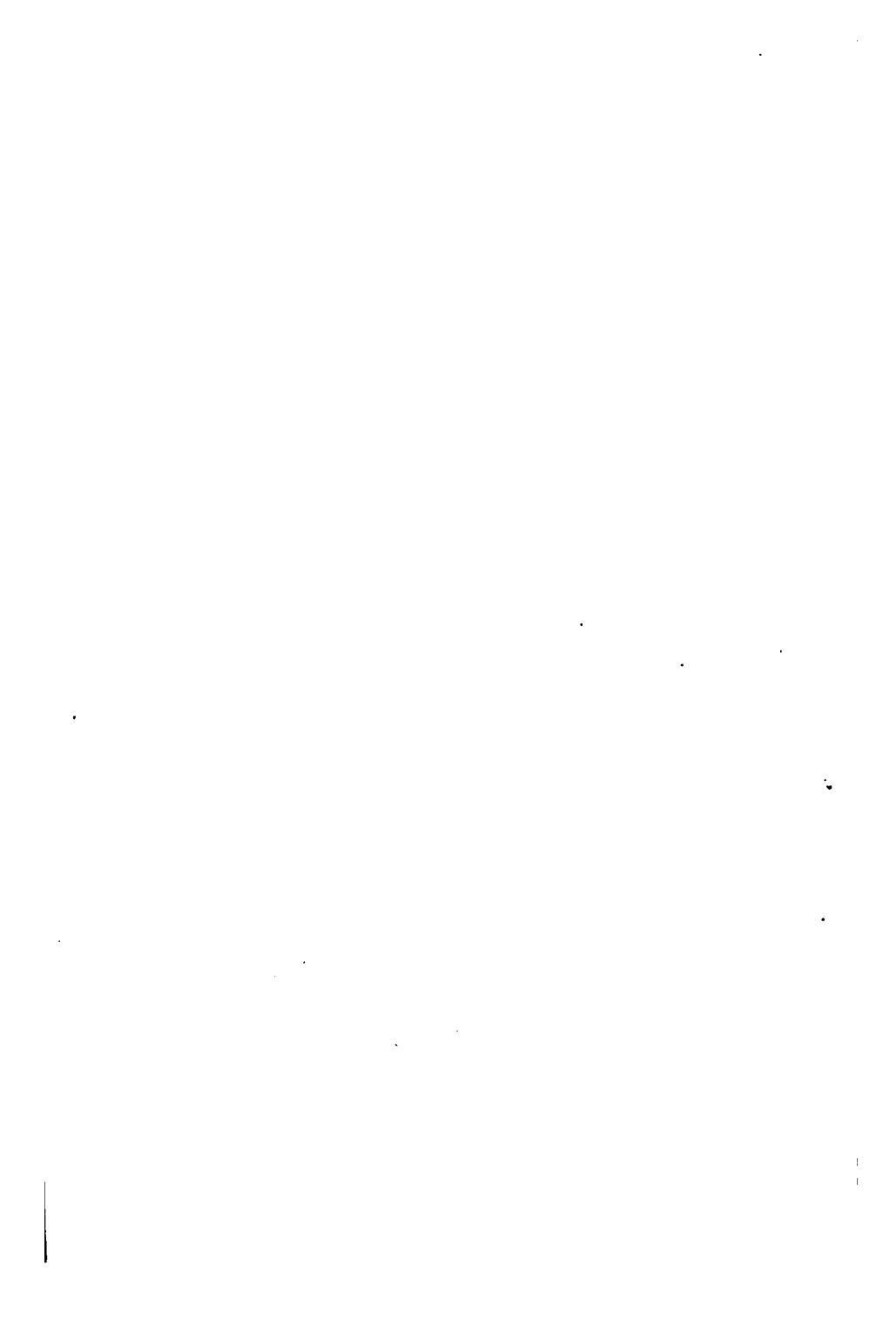


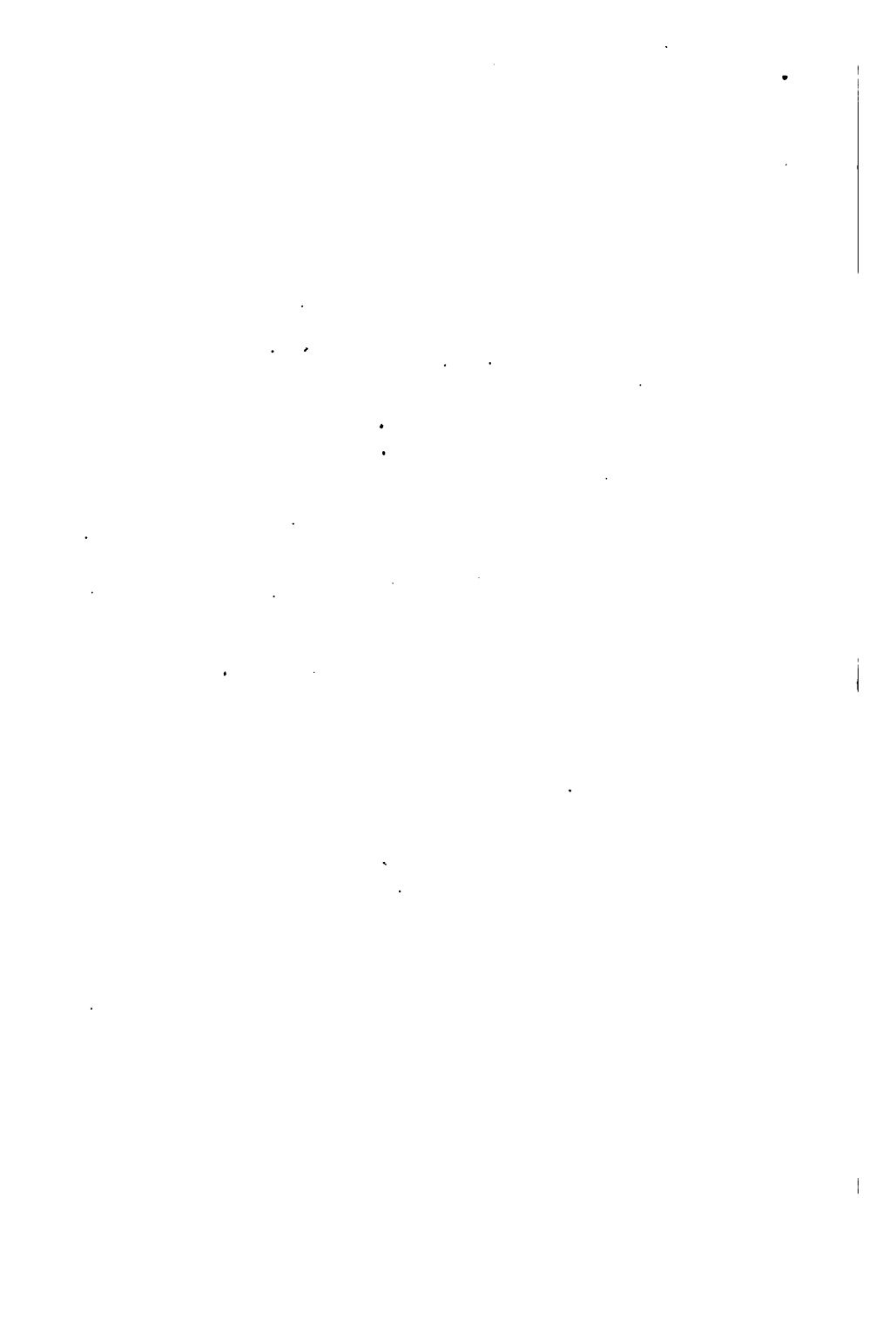
‘Father desires me to write to you, and sais, when are you coming to see us again and stop a long time. We are having a fine season, and father is hunting three days a week. I sometimes get two. Hughie Dagg has given me a splendid poney, and that is what I am writing you about. It is a gray, and Hughie says it is very like your horse Cheviot which was shot in that battel in Scotland, only, of course, he does not stand so high. You should come and see him. Mother sends you her kind love, and so does aunt.

‘Your affectionate nevey,

‘JOHN BELLISTON.’







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